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BY
DAVID J. BURRELL
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PREFACE

THIS book is the outcome of a series of sermons intended to set forth the teachings of Jesus in His conversations with individuals and groups of men.

The human side of His character is revealed most clearly in such interviews. There was never finer tact than His, nor ever such nice discernment of things and delicate handling of people.

We shall see herein that, as Heine says, "Jesus was no dreamer among the shadows, but a man among men."

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CHRIST AND MEN

I

THE CHILD AND THE EMPEROR

In which the Imperial Son of God is brought into contact with the most imperial of men; and thrones tremble at the beginning of the March toward the Golden Age.

Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enroll himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
LUKE ii, 1-7 (*cf.* MATT. ii, 1-18).

"IT came to pass in those days," says Luke. The phrase is significant. Rome had overspread the world "in those days," and Cæsar was a name to juggle with. "In those days" there was no more open vision; the lights of the sanctuary were quenched and the sceptre had departed from Judah. "In those days" the cycle of the World Powers had been completed and the time was ripe for the fulfilment of Daniel's vision: "*I saw by night, and behold, the*

four winds of heaven strove upon the sea: and four beasts came up, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. The second was like a bear; and they said unto it, Arise, devour much flesh! The third was like a leopard, having four heads; and dominion was given unto it. And, behold, the fourth beast was dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly; it had iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue of it."

The lion, the bear and the leopard had successively run their course in the rise and fall of Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Macedonia; and Rome, the nondescript fourth beast, was now in its climacteric of power. Let Daniel say what should follow: *"I beheld till the beast was slain and his body destroyed. And behold the Ancient of Days did sit upon a throne like the fiery flame, and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom for ever and ever."* (Dan. vii, 1-14.)

The fulness of time being come, God crosses the border into the territory of earthly power. The Incarnation is an invasion. A strange invasion! No trumpets are heard, no roar of artillery disturbs the quiet of the early morning. A mother sits crooning a lullaby to an Infant in her arms. This is the first note of the onset. What could be more helpless than the pink, dimpled hand that lies here on the mother's breast? Yet this hand is destined to cut the sinews of Roman supremacy and change the currents of history through all the coming ages.

Once and again this Child, during the thirty years

of the earthly sojourn, is destined to meet the Emperor face to face; and always with the same result. All subsequent history will be the record of the triumphant march of Immanuel toward his undisputed reign in the Golden Age.

The first approach of the two powers was at the massacre of Bethlehem. It is written that "Herod was troubled" when he heard of one "born King of the Jews." Well might he be troubled; old, feeble, bloody-minded, pursued by conscience, harried by the furies of a mislived past, this Idumean usurper, representing Cæsar's authority in Judea, was ill prepared to meet a new disturbance of his provincial rule. And his fear was well-grounded, since Jesus was really of the royal line. Had he known all the facts in the case he would have redoubled his efforts to destroy the Child. His birth was a far more ominous fact than Herod dreamed. Let Cæsar himself tremble! The song of the angels on the Judean hills is the trumpet call of a martial host arrayed against all powers of evil.

The incident at Bethlehem, however, was a mere preliminary skirmish. The murder of a score of children was an episode of slight consequence in the royal policies of those days. And it failed to accomplish its purpose; for "Joseph arose and took the young child and his mother by night and fled into Egypt."

The affair was shrewdly planned; but Herod reckoned without God. The futility of the bloody deed is set forth in two masterpieces of recent art. One of them is Holman Hunt's "Triumph of the Innocents," in which Joseph and the Virgin Mother and her Child are represented on their way to Egypt, followed by the

spirits of the slain innocents, one of whom carries a golden censer, while others come trooping after with palm branches. These are the vanguard of that noble army of martyrs who ever since have "followed in his train."

The other picture is "The Repose in Egypt," by Gérome. It represents the dull-eyed, wondering Sphinx, on the verge of the desert, between the world without hope and the world of progress. It is night. In the arms of the great image the mother reposes with the Child on her bosom; and from his face there radiates a light which penetrates the darkness of the surrounding wastes.

It was indeed a memorable flight; the first strategic move in the long campaign of centuries. It was a retreat preparatory to an advance all along the line.

We shall not see the Child and the Emperor face to face again until the former has grown to manhood. His ministry is now under way. He has gone up and down among the villages preaching, working wonders, troubling the corrupt times. His name is on every lip. He enters Jerusalem at length and begins to preach. Herod, desirous of making an end to his influence, presumes to threaten him.[1] His underlings come to Jesus, saying, "Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee!" But Jesus sees through the shallow device of the intriguing court. Observe his calm disdain: "Go tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the

[1] This is not the Herod of the massacre, but Herod Antipas, another of a smaller mould, who has been characterized by a distinguished historian as "the meanest thing the world ever saw."

third day I shall be perfected. Tell him, I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet shall perish out of Jerusalem." And the work goes on.

In vain does the earthworm lift its head against the advancing chariot of the King. "I must walk!" The behest of divine duty is upon Jesus; and who or what shall prevent it? He must accomplish the mighty task which has brought him from heaven to earth. "The kings of the earth do set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, saying, 'Let us break his bands asunder and cast his cords from us!' He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

It is the story of the centuries. "Kindle the fagots! Sharpen the sword! Let loose the lions!" cries Cæsar. "We will make an end of the Nazarene and his religion!" But the blood of the martyrs is ever the seed of the Church. The royal standards onward go. "I must walk!" says the Master. "I must walk on the heights of Bozrah, in the majesty of the Avenger, with garments dyed red. I must walk in the glory of him who cometh from Teman with the pestilence before him."

"Herod will kill thee," forsooth. So they said in the Terror when the streets of Paris were slippery with the blood of the innocents. The image of the Virgin Mother was torn from its shrine in Notre Dame and supplanted by a living courtesan, whom the mob worshipped as Goddess of Reason. Through the clash of arms and the shriek of the dying was heard the grim word of Voltaire, "Crush the Nazarene!" But calm over all rose the voice of the Master, "I

must walk to-day, to-morrow and the day following! I must lead my militant hosts, until the tabernacle of God shall come down among men."

So runs the Parable of Progress: "For the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it."

The next meeting of Christ and Cæsar was on the last day of the public ministry, when Jesus was teaching in Solomon's Porch. The Herodians, representing the Roman government in the Jewish Sanhedrin, sent a delegation to ensnare him. They said, "Master, we know that thou teachest truth and regardest not the person of men; tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou. Is is lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" Observe again the calm disdain: "Why tempt ye me, ye mask-wearers? Show me the tribute money." They gave him a penny; and he said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They answered, "Cæsar's." Then said he, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's."

This was "diplomacy" at its highest and best; an illustration of the truth that "peace hath its victories no less renowned than war." The conference on this occasion was of immeasurable importance not only because the parties concerned were the authorities of earth and heaven, but because of the great principle which was evolved from it.

Once and again the world powers have met, in what are technically known as "conventions," for the distribution of spoils or the division of territory. Such

was the "convention of 1572," when Catharine de Medici and the Duke of Alva came together on the borders of Spain to divide between them the Continent of Europe for the inquisition of the faith. Conventions of like character have been held by the so-called Great Powers in recent years for the partition of China, of the Dark Continent, of Korea. For the most part, however, they have left Christ out; the King who sits supreme over all.

In the brief and inconspicuous "convention" in Solomon's Porch a principle was laid down which formulated for all time the right relations of civil and ecclesiastical authority. In the proposition, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's," the fact is fairly stated, that Church and State are co-ordinate powers; that they are interdependent, yet independent each of the other, since they proceed along distinct lines; that they rest on mutual support and are entitled to loyal following, since both alike are ordained of God.

The last meeting of Christ and Cæsar was in the judgment hall. "And Pilate saith unto Jesus, Art thou a king? He answered, Thou sayest it; to this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. And Pilate brought Jesus forth and sat down in the judgment seat in the place that is called Gabbatha; and he said, Behold, your king! But they cried out, Away with him! away with him! Crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? They answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he him unto them to be crucified. And Pilate wrote a title

and put it on the cross, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Thus the issue was fairly drawn; they would have no king but Cæsar. And Jesus submitted. He bowed his head to the powers that be. For three mortal hours, hung up between heaven and earth, he bore the shame and agony; then with a fluttering sigh yielded up the ghost.

Defeat! Manifest defeat! Nay; he did but stoop to conquer. Had he not said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"? Wait. To-day, to-morrow and the day following, and then he will be perfected! He breaks the bands of death and ascends on high, taking captivity captive. The veil is drawn and, lo, yonder he sits upon his throne high and lifted up, saying, "Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forever more!" Alive? Aye, witness the nineteen centuries of Christian progress. He is alive, as no other historic personage is alive, in the councils of nations and of men. As the white plume of Henry of Navarre was ever to be seen in the forefront of battle, so are the presence and power of Jesus manifest in the conflicts of the ages.

And now at the end of the years we stand again at the watch-tower calling, "Watchman, what of the night?" And the watchman answers, "The night lingers but the shadows flee!"—"And what of Cæsar?"—"An empty name!"—"What of Rome and the Great Powers?"—"One by one they flourish and are gone!"—"What of the Church?"—"Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God!"—"And what of Christ?"—"He goeth forth conquering and

to conquer. The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is forever and ever!"

The end should have been seen from the beginning. It is vain to fight against God. The Child sits upon his throne of power and the hearts of the mighties are in his hands as the rivers of water. He came to establish his kingdom on earth; and he shall not forbear until he reigns where'er the sun does his successive journeys run.

It is vain to array one's self against manifest destiny. It is vain to cry, in the presence of the great invasion of the King of kings, "We will not have thee to rule over us!" The conflict is bound to be unequal, because the decree went forth from the beginning of eternity, "Thou art my son. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!"

Can we read history in the light of the Incarnation? If not, the lines must be blurred before our eyes. The logic of events is as meaningless as were the scars and fissures on the rocks until a scientist came, saying "Once upon a time a glacier passed this way." So the philosophy of history clears up when men look toward Bethlehem and say, "Behold, the invasion!" In the light of that stupendous event we are able not only to read old chronicles, but to discern the signs of the times. All the incidents of these nineteen centuries array themselves in lines converging toward the final conquest of the world by Christ.

What then? The part of reason is manifestly to fall in with the advance. The silver trumpet calls.

The Rider on the white horse leads his militant host to victory. Armageddon is near. Gog and Magog to the fray! It is Christ against Cæsar. It is truth against error. It is light against darkness. It is freedom against tyranny. It is the Golden Age against the dark ages. It is heaven against hell. Where do we stand? Under what king, the Child or the Emperor?

II

THE YOUTH AND THE DOCTORS

In which a Boy of twelve, in the presence of the most important body of scholars of his time, shows himself to be familiar with the problem of problems and his personal relation to it.

And they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.—Luke ii, 46-50.

The early life of Jesus is wrapped in mystery. It has been called "the great silence." His four biographers are singularly agreed in omitting the entire period between his birth and ministry, with the exception of a single episode. It is fair to presume, however, that there was nothing extraordinary in his youthful development. The record is, "He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." At three years of age, in accordance with custom, he assumed the tasseled robe. At five he entered the rabbinical school, where the Scriptures were his text-book. At ten he began the study of theology, as

elucidated in the Mishna, or traditional law. At twelve, the climacteric of life, he became a ben-hat-torah or "son of the law"; and was permitted to attend the Passover at Jerusalem.

That was a memorable event in the life of this Jewish boy. The pilgrims setting out from Nazareth would, doubtless, take occasion to join one of the many caravans wending their way, at that time, to the Holy City. As they journeyed they sang the Psalms of Ascent; such as, "I was glad when they said to me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord! Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces!" The heart of the young pilgrim must have been deeply moved by historic scenes along the way. The land was in its vernal beauty; the fig-yards and olive-groves just coming into bloom. Yonder was the battle field of Esdraelon; and, to the East, Gilboa, where "the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons." A little further on were the heights of Bethel, where Jacob dreamed his wonderful dream. And now they were passing through the Vale of Sychar, "where Jacob's well was."

At length they reached the summit of Olivet; and Jerusalem was before them. The gilded roofs and colonnades of the temple were gleaming in the sun. The pilgrims sang, "The Lord hath chosen Zion! He hath said, This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her sons shall shout aloud for joy!" Then, crossing the Kidron, they ascended the opposite slope at evening, where probably Joseph pitched his tent outside the walls. The Paschal lamb was slain

on the fourteenth of Nisan, and its blood was sprinkled on the posts and lintels of the tent. There were thousands of fires on the hillsides round about, where multitudes of pilgrims were celebrating the feast. The six succeeding days were devoted to imposing ceremonies in the temple; and then the crowds began to disperse.

It is not strange, when we remember the confusion incident to the departure of the numerous caravans, that the absence of the boy Jesus was not discovered at once: but when Joseph and Mary found he was not in their company, they immediately returned to the city and discovered him "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing, questioning and answering." In reply to his mother's gentle reproof he said, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"[1] And it is written, "They understood not." But the significance of his words is indicated in the statement that his mother "kept these sayings in her heart."

This is our solitary glimpse into the early life of Jesus; and it is full of suggestion. Let us get the picture before us. It was probably in the Hall Gazith; and in all the world there was no more distinguished body of scholars than those accustomed to assemble there. Of the number were Annas, the high priest and president of the Sanhedrin; Ben Uzziel, the Targumist who wrote the Chaldee Paraphrase; Joseph of Arimathea, a man of wealth and character; Ben

[1] The Revised Version, following the Syriac, renders, "in my Father's house." This is too narrow an interpretation of the original, which is, literally, "in the things or affairs of my Father."

Buta, who had been blinded by Herod for his devotion to the Jewish cause; Nicodemus; the aged Hillel, and Shammai, his rival; and Gamaliel, a professor in the University of Jerusalem, known as "the Flower of the Law." In the midst of this notable assemblage stood the boy of twelve, "hearing, asking questions and answering them."

No intimation is given as to the themes traversed in this remarkable conference; but we cannot go far wrong in supposing that it had to do particularly with the three supreme problems of life.

First: God. The men of that circle were theologians. It was their special function as religious leaders of Israel to make themselves familiar with what was then and is still called "the Science of God." At that time there were three parties in the Sanhedrin, to wit, the Pharisees, or orthodox party; the Sadducees, who formed the "liberal" or destructive school; and the Herodians, who insisted on adjusting the national faith and customs to the demands of Rome. But however these parties might differ in detail and particular, they were all agreed as to the fundamental doctrine of Deity. They were monotheists, stringent in their opposition to idolatry as opposed to the worship of the true God.

We may imagine the boy Jesus, listening to their discourse on the abstract, self-existent, immaterial One, and asking, "But how may we know that God is?" To which they would reply by presenting the stock arguments, "ontological," "teleological," "cosmological," et cetera, in proof of the divine existence; for these lines of evidence were practically as familiar then as now. And when he asked, "Has God ever

revealed himself to men?" they would open the Scriptures and turn to the theophanies and the story of the burning bush from which he spake, saying, "I AM THAT I AM." But the boy would ask again, "Has he ever bowed the heavens to come down, so that men could behold him?" And they could only say, "No, never. He is the transcendent, the absolute, the invisible One."

And the boy of twelve in their midst was the incarnate God! A miracle? Yes; more wonderful than all others, yet the one miracle necessary to the welfare of man. Inexplicable? Yes; "great is the mystery of godliness, God is manifest in flesh;" yet no more inexplicable, in its last reduction, than any other divine work, as, for example, the union of Matter and Spirit in the human constitution. We gain nothing by too close scrutiny on the one hand, or by minimizing the mystery on the other. The fact itself is so closely interwoven with the fabric of the Scriptures that they become as meaningless as the unintelligible Oracles of Delphos unless we are prepared to say that Christ is "very God of very God." And just there he meets the necessity of the race. It is not enough to say, as the Ritschlians do, that the incarnation is merely a "value judgment" and that Jesus is God because to our inner consciousness he answers the purposes of God. You may paint a picture of the sun on a great canvas and cover it with radiations of gold; but no night is illuminated by it, no flower blooms under it, no shivering people warm themselves before it. Christ is not a pictured sun, but the veritable Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams. He is "the brightness of the glory of God." The whole world feels his warmth;

in his light we see light; if he lay his quickening hand upon us we straightway cry, "My Lord and my God!"

Second: Man. Here is the complementary problem. It was the business of the distinguished Rabbis in Gazith to solve it. They were anthropologists; they were familiar with metaphysics and ethics. The two schools of Hillel and Shammai, opposed in many particulars, were agreed in these: that man was originally created in the divine likeness, that he had fallen from his high estate through sin and that his chief concern is to regain his forfeited birthright.

The boy in their midst may have been moved to ask, "Has this recovery ever been realized? Is there an instance of one who has so far delivered himself from the bondage of sin as to enter fully into the inheritance of God?" And what could they say? If they mentioned Abraham, he would answer, "But did not the faith of Abraham, on occasion, fail him?" If Noah, "Did he not lie drunken in the entrance of his tent?" If Moses, "Was he not betrayed by anger and so forbidden to enter the Land of Promise?" If David, "What means this cry from his closet on the housetop; 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness and according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions! For I have sinned and done evil in thy sight'?" They must have admitted that never once had there been an illustration of the Ascent of Man. The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there was any that wrought righteousness; and he sadly said, "There is none that doeth good, no not one!"

But the dream was realized in this boy of twelve. His birth was the descent of God; his life was the

ascent of man. Alone and solitary in a world of sinners, he was the Perfect One. There was no guile in his lips, no guile in his heart. The challenge of his later life was, "Who layeth anything to my charge?" And neither then nor during the succeeding centuries has there been any to accuse him.

The character of Jesus was as really the result of development as is the character of any common man. True, there was no inherent sin in him; but his circumstances were such as to make his conflict a very real one. It was one of the purposes of his human life to show how a man can get the better of his environment and keep himself unspotted from the world. But for this he might have come down from heaven a mature and perfect man. The monk Tauler, a Dominican mystic who wrote five hundred years ago, represents his advent in this wise:

There comes a galley laden,
A heavenly freight on board;
It bears God's Son, the Saviour,
The great Undying Word.

And proudly floats that galley,
From troubled coast to coast:
Its sail is love and mercy;
Its mast, the Holy Ghost.

Now earth hath caught the anchor,
The ship hath touched the strand;
God's Word, in fleshly garment,—
The Son,—steps out on land!

But had he appeared in such manner, he would have separated himself from all mankind by an omission of

the formative processes of life. In order that he might know and sympathize with our upward struggle, he must pass through it; wherefore it is written, "He grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." At every stage of this development, however, he was the Sinless One. His was the development of a perfect nature limited by the conditions of a sinful world. It was like the development of a fountain, which is as perfect when it issues from the rock as when it rolls in a torrent to the sea. Or, like that of the oak, which is as perfect when it shoots from the acorn as when it lifts its mighty arms to grapple with the storm. Jesus was not hurt by his environment; sin never touched him. As child, youth, man, he was always sinless; and thus he stands as a perpetual illustration of the Ascent of Man.

Third: Reconciliation; the reconciliation of a holy God with sinful men. At this point Messiah enters, "the hope of Israel"; one hand clasping the hand of God and the other the hand of man. The earliest of Jewish writers called him "the Daysman"; that is, the Reconciler. The prophecy of his coming runs uninterruptedly through Holy Writ. It would be scarcely possible for a company of such learned Rabbis as sat in the Hall Gazith to refrain from discussing it.

The boy in their midst would ask, "Who is this Messiah? When he cometh, how will ye know him?" And they would answer, "He is to be King of Kings, 'great David's greater Son.' In the fulness of time he will appear to deliver Israel; and he will reign in glory among us." The boy would ask, "What then is the meaning of this scripture, 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel,

which being interpreted is, God with us'; or of this, 'He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes he may be healed; or what is the meaning of your sacrifices? Why is the blood of the Paschal lamb sprinkled on the lintel of every door and upon all the sacred things of the temple? Why this blood, blood, blood everywhere?" And they could only say in their bewilderment, "It is written that if a man sin and bring a lamb without spot or blemish to the altar, his sin is taken from him." But how can the blood of a lamb atone for sin? How can it wash away the crimson stain? They knew not.

This boy of twelve was their Messiah; and they did not recognize him. He was the antitype of all their sacrifices. His was the blood that should cleanse from sin. Was he aware of his personality and mission? Aye; always. The realization of his mission began with dawning consciousness. He knew who he was, whence he had come and what his errand was. Else what did he mean when he said to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It is true that, in assuming mortal form, he "emptied himself" of the outward tokens of his Godhood; but never for a moment in such manner as to become ignorant of his mission or impotent to perform it. He "laid his glory by," but never so that the scepter was not within reach, and never so that the shadow of the cross was not over him.

He returned to Nazareth after this incident and became an apprentice in Joseph's shop. As the years passed on, he grew in stature and wisdom and in favor

with God and man. One day he closed the door of the carpenter shop and went out into his ministry. Three years later we find him again in the Hall Gazith in the midst of the doctors. The old priest Annas is there, grayer and more burdened with years; and, as if moved by some strange apprehension of the truth, he cries, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of the living God?" Jesus answers, "Thou hast said. Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven!" Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses. What think ye?" His associates said, "He is guilty of death."

And behold him still in the midst of the doctors. "Where is the wise, where is the disputer of this world?" Not yet with all their wisdom have they found out God. He stands in the midst of the learned ones, "hearing, asking, answering." And there is none but himself in all the world to explain the three great doctrines of God and man and reconciliation. None but himself has ever answered or can answer the two questions, "How can God be just and the justifier of the ungodly?" and "How can a man be just with God?"

III

THE MAN AND THE PEOPLE

In which the man of Nazareth, being everybody's friend, gets an audience with all sorts and conditions of men.

Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat.—LUKE v, 1-3.

THIS Man was followed wherever he went by all sorts of people.[1] "The multitude pressed upon him." He had no need to resort to adventitious methods for securing a congregation. No matter where he preached, on the sea shore, at the street corner or in Solomon's Porch, the people flocked to hear him.

Nor did they fail to give him their attention. All the world knows that Paul was an orator; but on a certain occasion, when he was preaching at Joppa, one of his hearers was overcome with sleep. No such incident ever happened, so far as we are aware, under the preaching of Jesus. It is written, "All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

[1] When it is said "The common people heard him gladly," we are to understand by the term "people" not the *profanum vulgus,* but, as in the margin, the multitude.

It would be interesting, were it possible, to analyze his singular power over men. To say that he possessed all the elements of true eloquence such as simplicity, directness, picturesqueness, logical coherence, warmth, earnestness and convincing power, is not enough. Here is something beyond the homiletic or any other art. You have, perhaps, seen a portrait wrought by a great master, with eyes that had the singular quality of following you wherever you went. A like characteristic we observe in the teaching of Jesus. Coleridge expressed this in the terms, "It finds me." Indeed, it searches out and finds the hearts and consciences of all. Jesus was not merely able to sway an audience—others have ruled from the throne of eloquence—but his influence was equally magnetic in personal conversation. It was distributive, holding the multitude because it held every unit in it.

Were we required to put our hand on a single quality or characteristic of which we might say, "This accounts for it," we should name his intense humanness. He was called "the Son of Man" not only because of his representative relation to the race, but because he was distinctively and pre-eminently a man among men. He was able to address himself to the wants of the multitude, all and singular, by reason of his broad acquaintance and sympathy with humanity. He was an intuitive and infallible psychologist, since "he knew what was in man."

He was everybody's preacher because he was everybody's friend. He stood on a level with his congregation. He wore no robe but homespun; he asked no better pulpit than the prow of a little boat or a place at the corner of a street. He touched men because he

was ever in vital touch with them. And the secret of his unparalleled power lay in the fact that he had something to say, and said it.

He had something to say to the poor.

And the poor of his time were poor indeed. We make a distinction between "God's poor" and the "devil's poor." We take a sympathetic interest in the relief of such as are thrifty and industrious, but unfortunate. Our hearts go out to those who with their best efforts find it difficult to make both ends meet or keep the wolf from the door. But Jesus had a place in his heart for the ne'er-do-weels; for the thriftless, penniless and friendless. Who cares for these? For the men with sunken cheeks and watery eyes who shuffle along our streets? For the women whose faces are sodden with drink, drawing thin shawls around their shivering shoulders and stretching out their hands for alms? Who cares for the devil's poor? They live forlorn and die unwept. "Rattle his bones over the stones; he's only a pauper whom nobody owns." Who cares? Christ cares! His heart is warm with compassion for them, and all the more because they have so little pity on themselves. He hears their helpless moan, their bitter cry. Do you ask the credentials of Jesus? Here they are: "Go tell John that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." God be praised! The meanest beggar in the world has one true friend who tells him hopefully that it is never too late to mend; that though he has squandered his inheritance and is as poor as poverty, he may turn around and be rich toward God.

And he had something to say to the rich.

The rich of his time were very rich; for the wealth of the world was then concentrated in the hands of a few. Jesus did not denounce them indiscriminately. He respected the rights of property and recognized the fact that a man may have abundant possessions, yet be a righteous man. He was, however, no sycophant. He was often entertained by persons of rank and affluence; and his table-talk was full of searching truths. He warned his wealthy friends against avarice, saying: "It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a man whose heart is set upon riches to enter the kingdom of God." He warned them against the folly of spending time and energy in acquiring a mere modicum of yellow dust, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he said, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be?" He told them plainly that there are rich men in hell, saying of one who had been clothed in purple and fine linen and had fared sumptuously every day, "He lifted up his eyes being in torment." He pointed out to them clearly that it was better to part with everything else than to lose eternal life: "Go sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me."

He had something to say to workingmen.

And he could say it sympathetically and effectively,

because he was himself a member of the Third Estate. He knew what it was to shove the plane and drive the saw and wipe the perspiration from his face at the close of a weary day. One word of his, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," has in it the ultimate solution of all controversies between capital and labor. But he knew the danger of the shop. He knew the proneness of the toiling class to lose themselves in the sordid routine of bread-and-butter work. The truth of Carlyle's parable respecting the men of the Dead Sea, "They made no use of their souls and so lost them; but they retained a bewildered and half conscious reminiscence of the time when they were men with souls responsive to the eternal verities," was uttered by Jesus in a far more effective way. He stood, as it were, at the door of the workshop, saying, "O men, be in your labor, yet not of it! Let not your hand-to-mouth struggle crowd out all nobler aspirations! For the life is more than meat and the body than raiment. Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. And consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Take, therefore, no anxious thought for the morrow. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

He had a message, also, for the wise.

Not for the "sophoi"; that is, those who were wise in their own conceit. The doctors came to him with

their hair-splitting questions, and he answered them never a word. But he had much to say to the "philosophoi"; that is, such as desired to be wise. He gave them great truths to ponder on. He spoke to Nicodemus of regeneration, evoking the response, "How can these things be?" and having plainly announced the mystery, he followed it with a statement concerning the saving power of the gospel, simple as a kindergarten lesson, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If a man is in quest of sublimities and profundities, he shall have something to think of; he will find in the teaching of Jesus an unfathomable ocean of truth rolling before him. If he be engaged in the earnest quest of truths that make for righteousness and eternal life, he shall find them there, clear as the sun at noon-day. The Master, taking a child upon his knee, said to his hearers, "Except ye become as this little child"—in your attitude toward truth, in your readiness to receive it—"ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God." His doctrine is, indeed, like an ocean, on the shore of which seers stand dreaming dreams and seeing visions and losing themselves in contemplation of its mysterious depths, while little children play along the edge, laughing and making merry, the waters laving their feet.

And he had a message for doubters.

Nothing for defiant infidels like Pilate, who, with a curling of the lip, asked, "What is truth?" Not a word for boastful agnostics who said, like Pliny the elder, "There is only one thing certain, to wit, that there is nothing certain." His pearls of truth were

not scattered before such as these. But for honest doubters, that is, those who were bewildered at the cross-roads and eager to know the way, he had always a word of comfort and encouragement. Every age is "an age of doubt"; and there are always those who, having lost their bearings, long to know. One such went wandering into the darkness, after the crucifixion of Christ, like a blind man groping along the wall. Poor Thomas! His best friend was dead, his fondest hopes were crushed. He had heard in a roundabout way of the resurrection of Jesus, but it was too good to believe. Ah, how gladly would he have believed it! For such as he, grieving by reason of their doubt and doing their very best to be rid of it, Christ has infinite consideration. Then said he unto Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." O doubting friend, touch Jesus! He can be touched. To know him, to commune with him, is to believe. All doubts vanish when the light of his countenance shines upon us. And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God!"

And he had much to say to believers.

Two things in particular he required of his disciples; namely, consistency and usefulness. What a high ideal of character he set before them! "Be ye perfect." "Be ye holy." "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." "Ye are the light of the world; let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God."

And what frequent exhortations to usefulness! "Say not, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest. Lift up your eyes and see; the fields are white already unto the harvest! Thrust in your sickles and reap." The Parables of the Barren Fig-tree, of the Talents, of the Stumbling-block and the Millstone are all for believers. In the teaching of Jesus there is not a sentence to encourage the thought that the chief end of a Christian is to secure his own salvation, or to build up personal character. The spirit of unselfishness breathes through his word. Go out after others. "Give ye them to eat." "Constrain them to come in." "As the Father hath sent me into the world so I send you. Go ye, therefore, into the highways and hedges and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and evangelize. Spend and be spent for others, and for the glory of God." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

And most searching of all was his message to hypocrites.

The word "hypocrite" is literally "under a mask." Oh, how Jesus hated shams! He found the religious leaders of his time living under a mask. As he stood in the Temple-court he saw them ostentatiously fling their golden coins into the trumpet-mouth of Corban; and when a poor widow came by, modestly dropping in her farthing, he said, "Behold, she hath given more than they all." He saw them wearing long robes, with broad phylacteries, and frontlets between their eyes, standing on the corner of the streets, and making long prayers to be seen and heard of men; whereupon he said, "Two men went up to the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. And the

Pharisee prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are! But the Publican stood afar off, not daring to lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but beating on his breast and crying, God be merciful to me the sinner! I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other." He saw them offering their tithes of garden-herbs and observing fasts, with long faces; and he said, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; ye are as whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Thus his constant word was, "Be what you seem." Be honest and true. Be transparent as the light. Off with your masks! Off with your disguises! God sees you through and through. All things are naked and open before him. And to the people he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God."

But sweetest, tenderest, most helpful was his word to the sorrowing.

Hear his beatitude: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And hear his invitation: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Hear him saying, as he stands beside an open grave: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." At that time the hope of immortality had grown thin and tenuous, and the bereaved were almost without hope. He bade them lift their

eyes from the open grave to the open heavens; he told them of the Father's house, and said, "I go to prepare a place for you." In the light of his teaching, our farewell to dying friends is *"Auf wiedersehen."* There is to be a reunion beyond. Death does not end all.

But most of all, he spoke to sinners.

His enemies reproached him for being the "friend of sinners." They said, "He eateth with publicans and sinners." His simple defence was, "I am come to seek and to save the lost." He was the incarnation of the seeking love of God. His quest is set forth in the parable of the woman with the lighted candle seeking the lost coin; and of the shepherd with lantern in hand going out on the dark mountains after the lost sheep. He was not ashamed to converse with the sinful woman of Samaria at high noon, though he knew the finger of every passer-by would be pointed at him. His last miracle, as he hung upon the cross in the very article of death, was to save a malefactor who, grieving over a misspent life, was paying the death penalty beside him: "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise!" So, living and dying, he was the friend of sinners. He is mighty to save, even unto the uttermost. He hath power on earth to forgive sin.

He had one more message, for hearers; for such as have long listened to his gospel, yet not heeded it.

How many there are who remember the old, old story as it was told them at their mother's knee. They have read their Bibles over and over again, and have seen the blood-stained face of Christ looking out upon them from every page of prophecy and chronicle, and have yet not accepted him. To these and to all whose ears are dull of hearing and whose hearts have been

hardened by long familiarity with the truth, he addresses this faithful admonition: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was built upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

These are some of the reasons why Jesus was the popular preacher of his time, and so remains through all the ages. He knew the heart of humanity and sympathized with it. He aimed straight at the consciences of men. If he were to return to-day and stand in the pulpit, or preach at the corner of the street, or address us in personal conversation, his word would be to the same purport: "I am the way, the truth and the life," he would say, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." If men resist his appeal, it is by reason of fatuity and against the ultimate argument of common sense. Is there any other who speaks to me, to you, to the generic man as Jesus does? "To whom can we go but unto thee," asked Peter, "thou only hast the words of eternal life?" Let those who reject him ask themselves, "To whom else can we go?"

IV

THE PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN

In which the Campaign of the Kingdom begins with the magical rule of One *plus* One.

Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

He brought him unto Jesus.—JOHN i, 35-42.

By the bank of the Jordan stands the prophet of the wilderness, gaunt, cadaverous, clad in a garment of camel's hair and girt about the loins with a leathern girdle, his eyes aflame with holy enthusiasm, his voice lifted in the warning cry, "Repent ye! Repent ye! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The people come flocking to hear him from the towns and villages near and far.

At this time there was, on every hand, a feeling that the Messiah was about to come. Possibly this was he! But his words were plain, "I am not the Christ. I am but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord! For there cometh One after me whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the

Holy Ghost and fire. His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. Repent ye, therefore, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. The time is at hand. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God!"

One day as he stood preaching thus at the river side he pointed to One in the distance, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for he was before me." And immediately two of his disciples, detaching themselves from the crowd, followed Jesus, who, turning, asked, "What seek ye?"—"Rabbi," they answered, "where dwellest thou?"—He said, "Come and see." One of them, however, was unwilling to go further until he had first found his brother Simon, to whom he said, "We have found the Messias"; *and he brought him to Jesus.* The next day Philip of Bethsaida was invited to follow Christ; he also sought his friend Nathanael, saying, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and prophets did write!" On his explaining that it was Jesus of Nazareth, his friend exclaimed incredulously, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" to which he answered, "Come and see." *And he brought him to Jesus.*

So runs the story of the beginning of the Church. Coming and bringing! One coming to Christ and bringing another to him. Thus was formed the little group which was destined to be the nucleus of an organization of hundreds of millions. Coming and

bringing! It is the watchword of the propaganda. This is the magical rule of two,—one and another,—by which the world is to be restored to God.

We follow in the footsteps of John the Baptist and of all the evangelists of the ages in saying, "Come to Jesus." There are those who insist that the invitation is quite out of date. "The time is past," they say, "when men can be frightened into repentance by the fear of hell, or brought to righteousness by the affirmation that Christ alone can save." We are advised that "the revival of the future," when it comes, will not be along the old lines of solicitude for individuals, but will aim rather at "social regeneration." Its gospel will be a purely ethical gospel, in which men will be invited not to "come to Jesus," but to turn over a new leaf. But the method of Christ himself is good enough for us and for all who follow him.

The invitation will not be out of date until the Bible is out of date; for the Bible perpetually rings the changes on it. In the midst of the Old Testament stands One, like a huckster at the corner of the streets, vending the wares of eternal life, crying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" And in the midst of the New Testament stands Another, nay, the very Same, crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life!"

The call of the Evangel will not be out of date until our hymn books, also, are obsolete; for this is their constant refrain. In the revival of fifty years ago,

when multitudes were in the Valley of Decision and thousands on thousands were made prisoners of hope, the song was,

Come to the Lord and seek salvation;
Sound the praise of his dear name;
Glory, honor and redemption;
Christ the Lord has come to reign!

In the earlier revival under the searching preaching of Finney and his contemporaries, who declared the same gospel of repentance and faith, the great assemblages were swept along by such hymns as,

Come, ye sinners poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore!
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.
He is able, he is willing;
Doubt no more!

The preaching of Moody, the old-fashioned presentation of the gospel of repentance and faith, on which were placed the most unmistakable evidences of the divine approval, was accompanied by the singing of such persuasive songs as,

Come to Jesus, come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus just now!
He will save you, he will save you,
He will save you just now:

and

Come to the Saviour, make no delay;
Here in his Word he's shown us the way;
Here in his courts he's standing to-day,
Tenderly saying, Come!

All pastors and evangelists who have been efficient in seasons of ingathering will bear witness to the power of Philip's word, "Come and see!" Let the sound of going be heard in the tops of the mulberry trees, or the Pentecostal sound of the rushing mighty wind, and all theories and speculations as to the how and wherefore of revival methods give place to the old invitation, "Come to Jesus." And when sinners turn from the error of their ways and fall in with the overtures of divine grace, they tell their new-found hope and gratitude in this wise:

> Just as I am, Thy love unknown
> Has broken every barrier down:
> Now, to be thine, yea, Thine alone,
> O Lamb of God, I come!

Out of date? Oh, no; not until sin and its penalty are out of date: "Come now, saith the Lord, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Not until sorrow is out of date: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Not until salvation is out of date; "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Not until heaven is out of date: "I am the way, the truth and the life," said Jesus; "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." The celestial courts are

thronged with redeemed sinners, and there is not one among them who does not wear the "fine linen, clean and white" of Christ's imputed righteousness and join in the anthem, "Worthy art thou to receive honor and glory and power and dominion; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every tongue and kindred and people and nation, and hast made us to be kings and priests unto God!"

So then we preach the old gospel of invitation. Science and philosophy have ruled out many of the customs of the past and devised new applications of energy and new methods of thought; but they have not improved upon the original plan of salvation. They have discovered no new gospel to live and die by.

One of the survivors of the ill-fated expedition which set out recently to explore Labrador has returned with a pathetic story. It appears that on reaching their destination they plunged into the interior with an inadequate supply of provisions. As time passed the horrors of starvation stared them in the face, until they were driven to eating their moccasins and cowhide mittens and mouldy scrapings of flour bags. At length, growing weaker and weaker, they threw away their sextant, camp equipments and everything that could be dispensed with; but they kept a treasured copy of the Bible. Finally, two of them came staggering to a friendly cliff against which they pitched their tent. One of these being able to go no further, the other kindled a fire against the face of the rock where it would cast its grateful warmth over his companion, then sat down beside him and read the Fourteenth Chapter of John: "Let not your

heart be troubled. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." Then he turned away, lacking the courage to say farewell, and started out upon a futile quest for help. On returning some days later he found poor Hubbard sitting against the face of the rock, dead, with the Bible and his diary beside him. In the diary he had written, "I think the boys will be able, with the Lord's help, to save me.—I am prepared; that is all." So long as the gospel can show its effectiveness in such circumstances, and until we are shown another Book, another gospel and another Christ to help us, we are bound to keep on saying, "Come to Jesus! He is a help to the poor and needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

But coming to Christ is not all; it is only the beginning of the Christian life. When a man has made the first step of a journey he leaves that step behind him and goes trudging on. So when one has come to Jesus for salvation that ends his "coming." He has taken the hand of a faithful guide who has promised to bear him company to the journey's end.

All the rest is Bringing. Andrew goes out and brings his brother Simon. Philip goes out and brings his friend Nathanael. This is the harvesting of the kingdom. This is the service of those who follow Christ: "Go ye out into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in."

If it be asked, "Why should I spend my life in this manner?" we answer, All the motives that can appeal to thoughtful men are applicable here. The motives are three; let us begin with the lowest.

The first and lowest is Self-interest.

We seek our personal salvation. This is completely gained in one final and comprehensive act of self-surrender. If we ask "assurance," we shall find it not by working in upon ourselves or seeking by sheer introactive effort to deepen our spiritual life, but by serving faithfully in the lines which our Master has marked out for us. The assurance of faith, which is the secret of a happy life, comes not to those who sit down disconsolately to examine themselves and better their condition by a dead lift of longing, but to those who go into the yellow field, thrust in the sickle and reap beside their Lord.

A traveller, lost on a bleak western prairie in the deepening twilight, felt himself yielding more and more to a drowsiness which meant certain death. He bravely resisted, struggled on, felt his eyelids closing down and his limbs growing numb, when suddenly he stumbled over something in the way. It was the body of a man. Dead? He stooped over him. The pulse still fluttered, the flesh was warm. He chafed him, gathered him up in his arms, and, seeing a light in the distance, struggled on with his burden toward it. He was weary, the perspiration stood upon his face, but he must hold out. It meant life or death. At length he staggered with his burden across the threshold of a farmhouse. Saved! Saved in saving the other man! Ah, there are multitudes who come up to heaven's gate, wearied in like self-denying and self-forgetful service, and have an abundant salvation ministered unto them.

The happiest man that ever lived was the One who most forgot himself in thinking of others. What was

he doing at Sychar? A woman was there athirst for the living water, and he had come through the scorching sun to give her the draught which alone could satisfy her need. What was he doing in the porches at Bethesda? Here were the lame, the halt and withered; he had come to heal them. What was he doing yonder at Gadara beyond the lake? A maniac was there dwelling among the tombs; he had come to dispossess him of the Evil One. So he journeyed hither and yon, on errands of mercy, thinking of all but himself. And why is he climbing Calvary with the cross upon him? He has assumed the burden of the world's sin and will bear it in his body on the tree. Thus he empties himself, makes himself of no reputation, forgets himself in our behalf. And in this he finds his happiness; "he sees of the fruit of the travail of his soul and is satisfied." Let the mind which was in Christ Jesus be also in us.

The second motive is Benevolence.

The world's aphorism is, "Look out for number one"; but the philosophy of a Christian has to do with number two. It teaches us to be a neighbor to every man. The initial step of the Christian life is out of self. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." To follow Christ is to tread in his footsteps; and his footsteps lead to the places where the suffering cry for help. The utmost weight of emphasis is placed on this duty by the fact that Jesus is pleased to identify himself with those who thus appeal to us.

A Russian legend tells of a poor serf who on a bitter night passed a soldier on guard whose teeth were chattering with cold. "Man," said he, "you shiver,

you are freezing: take my coat," and therewith, throwing his greatcoat upon the shoulders of the sentry, he passed on. Long after, the serf came up to heaven's gate, and looked to see his Lord clad in royal garb. He found him at last, but not arrayed in splendid garments, as he had expected. "Master," he said, "thou wearest my coat."—"Aye," said Jesus, "I have worn it ever since thou gavest it me that cold night."—There is truth in this legend; for did not the Master himself say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me"?

The third motive, and the highest, is Piety.

It is a true saying, "The chief end of man is to glorify God." We are created in his likeness, and we regain our lost estate only by returning to him. "This is life eternal, to know God." But how shall we know him, and how shall we return to him, and how shall we lose ourselves in him? In the Brahman religion the highest degree of virtue is *Apavarga,* that is, "to be swallowed up in Brahm." The devotee sits all day long, indifferent to the world about him, lost in meditation. Ask him what he is doing: and he will tell you that he is sinking his personality in the Ineffable One. There is beneath this pagan conception a profound and glorious truth. The highest attainment possible to a human soul is to lose itself in God; not, however, by any pantheistic surrender of personality, not in any subjective process of sentimental reflection, but in the complete blending of the human with the divine will; in an entire surrender of personal ambition to the divine plan of salvation.

God is at work in the world. His great purpose is

to save the children of men. In pursuance of this plan his only-begotten Son came into the world to suffer and die for us. He never forgot his errand. In his boyhood he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and, later on, he said, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." What was he doing? Seeking and saving the lost. In his passion his hands were stretched out to the children of men. And he invites his followers to participate in his glory by co-operating in this work. "As the Father sent me into the world," he said, "so send I you. Go ye, therefore; bring them in!" At this point manhood reaches its highest level. Here we regain our lost inheritance; here we lose ourselves in the Infinite; here we devote our lives to his service and become partakers of the glory of God.

Is it not singular, in view of such considerations, that any of those who profess to follow Christ should stand in the market-place with folded hands? "Alas for the rarity of Christian charity under the sun."

The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. We have the Bible; we have the Gospel; we have Christ. The light of the cross streams over us. And all around us are friends and kinsfolk still in darkness and the shadow of death. Oh, let us run with the message, "Come to Jesus!" We have the hope of heaven; the windows are open above us; the call to the marriage supper falls upon our ears. The leper of Samaria said to his fellows, when they had feasted full in the Syrian camp, "My brethren, we do not well; this day is a day of good tidings and we hold our peace." Oh, let us tell the besieged and famishing that the siege is lifted, that the drought is

past and God's dew and rain are falling down! My brethren, we do not well. We have eaten at the King's table; we have refreshed ourselves with his grapes and pomegranates, his sacramental bread and wine. And, behold, there is enough in the Father's house for all; enough and to spare! Let us go out and bring them in.

V

THE EVOLUTION OF A CREED

In which a man born blind comes into touch with Jesus and receives his sight, and something more.

Jesus, to a man born blind: "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam." And he went and came seeing.

The Man's Neighbors: "How were thine eyes opened?"

The Man: "One that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes and said 'Go wash in the Pool of Siloam:' So I went away and washed and came seeing."

Pharisees: "How didst thou receive thy sight?"

The Man: "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and I see."

Pharisees: "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

The Man: "Whether he is a sinner I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Pharisees: "What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?"

The Man: "I told you even now, and ye did not hear; therefore would ye hear it again? Would ye also become his disciples?"

Pharisees: "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses, but as for this man we know not whence he is."

The Man: "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God he could do nothing."

Pharisees: "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us." And they cast him out.

Jesus, having found the man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The Man: "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?"

Jesus: "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee."

The Man: "Lord, I believe!" And he worshipped him.—JOHN ix, 1-38.

A MAN without a creed is a pitiable creature. No one can have confidence in him. Would you patronize a tradesman who did not believe in sixteen ounces to the pound and in paying his obligations when they fell due? Or would you vote for a candidate who had no convictions as to political morality and did not know whether public office is a "graft" or a public trust? But if a well-formulated code of principles is important in trade or politics, how much more in the province of religion, which has to do with the momentous issues of eternal life?

If ever a man could be excused for having no definite opinions in these premises, it was the blind beggar at the gate. He lived apart in a world of darkness, addressing himself to the difficult problem of making both ends meet. He seems, however, to have had certain clear-cut views of God and of the supernatural. He had heard of Jesus, moreover, as a great teacher and wonder-worker; but no occasion had arisen for formulating an opinion as yet. Nevertheless, as events were destined to prove, he was ready to accept the truth when it should dawn upon him. The good God always comes out to meet such a man while he is yet a great way off.

"And as Jesus passed by he saw him." How brief and simple the statement; yet what issues were involved in it! The disciples, it appears, were discussing the beggar's case from a theological standpoint, the question being, Who had sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? We note three different views. Some of them regarded the beggar as a notorious instance of heredity. His ancestors had eaten sour grapes and his teeth were set on edge. To others he was an object of just retribution. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." But Jesus waved both views aside, saying, "This man is a candidate for divine mercy; the works of God shall be made manifest in him." Thereupon he spat on the ground and made clay, with which he anointed the eyes of the blind man, saying "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And he went and came seeing. As we proceed with the narrative it will become more and more obvious that the man's blindness was really a blessing in disguise, since it brought him into the clear light of truth and the mercy of God.

"Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm
That drives us nearer home!"

But then the trouble began. The man was immediately put under inquisition by his friends and neighbors, who were overwhelmed with wonder and curiosity, and by the rabbinical leaders, who found here a new bone of contention. The question as to the stupendous claims of Jesus was sufficiently vexed already without this addition of fuel to the fire. The man was summoned before them and interrogated to

little effect. He showed himself a clever dialectician; but as to the miracle, he knew as little as they about it. The case is chiefly interesting because it marks the progress of a man groping his way toward truth, free from prejudice, obedient to the leadings of a kind Providence and willing to go wherever the increasing light should lead him.

The first question which arose was naturally as to the man's identity. On this point there was a difference of opinion, some saying, "This is he" and others, "This is like him;" but, he himself, being in a position to give the casting vote, said, "I am he." So at the outset, there was something the man knew; and this is important as emphasizing the fact that one in quest of a creed must have a starting-point. He must be able to lay his hand upon something and say, "This I know." However small and apparently insignificant this something may be, it may, like the broken oar that drifted eastward to the Spanish coast, lead to the discovery of a new world. The A of this blind man's alphabet is, "I am he." It is, as Decartes indicates in his philosophy, a matter of tremendous importance that a man should be able to say, "I am myself," since this is the shibboleth of self-consciousness. Just here man is distinguished from all the lower orders of life: as Pascal says, "The universe may be bulkier than I am, yet am I the greater; since if the universe crush me it knows nothing, while I know what happens and what does it."

The beggar knew, furthermore, that he had been blind. This is his second step toward a definite faith. He was not likely to forget the long unbroken night in which he had lived thus far.

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon;
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!"

On analysis this will appear to be a great advance on mere self-consciousness. It marks the continuity of life. A Corporal of the Old Guard sits in the village inn with a group of gossips about him. "It was twenty years ago," he says, "when we charged up the hill against the British troops. There I received this sabre wound upon my cheek." But the horse he rode in that fierce charge, long turned out to pasture, does not dwell upon the memory of Waterloo. So much is a man better than a horse. He who can link the past with the present can also link the future with it. To remember is to hope. Thus the backward look is proof of immortality. If it be true, as scientists say, that the chemical factors of our physical constitution are completely changed in a cycle of seven years, how could the old Corporal recall the events of three cycles past were it not that the tenant is superior to the house? So Paul says, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Death is but a line of shadow falling across our path: we cross it and go living right on.

The third step in the blind man's progress is his affirmation "Now I see." His words are "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." It is clear, however, that this one thing is really complex, including his knowledge of the "I," the past blindness and the restored sight. There could be no mistake about his seeing now. Yonder was the blue sky; here the shining dome of the temple; there the green slopes

of Olivet and the purple vineyards; and close to him were the perplexed but kindly faces of his friends and neighbors. There could be no question about it.

But it is a mistake to say that the blind man's "creed" was comprehended in these words, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." The results of personal experience do not furnish a sufficient groundwork for the spiritual life. Faith must go beyond experience. The assurance of pardon is not the sum total, but only the beginning of salvation. Of course a Christian should be able to say, "Whereas I was once blind, now I see"; but alas for him if this is his whole Confession of Faith.

You may hear it in the "experience meetings," of the church; the story of conversion and the song of gratitude. "Oh, happy day that fixed my choice on thee, my Saviour and my God." But it is not enough. Shall the fortunate sailors who have made their way from the shipwreck to the shore stand crying, "We are saved! We are saved!" or shall they not rather heed the demands of duty in behalf of those who are still clinging to the shrouds or drifting on broken spars? The assurance of pardon is but a meagre and inadequate creed for those who justly apprehend the full significance of the higher life.

The next step taken by the blind man leads him distinctly nearer the truth. He knows there has been a miracle in his case; and protests to the Pharisees that it is a marvellous thing that they should be unable to account for it. He reminds them that since the world began there had been no such healing of congenital blindness. The "marvellous thing" is a miracle; a miracle is simply the interposition of the super-

natural in the routine of current events; it is the making bare and thrusting in of the divine arm.

"But how," they ask, "were thine eyes opened?" Once, twice, thrice they insist upon it. He can only tell them of the anointing with clay and the washing in Siloam; but he knows as well as they that this does not adequately account for it. The clay and the washing were but phenomena. If the healing in this case had been a plain operation for the removal of cataract, no one would have thought of saying, "The scalpel did it." We cannot help reasoning from the scalpel to the surgeon. So, pursuing the record of creation through the factors of matter, force and law, we come at length to the ultimate proposition, "In the beginning, God."

The tendency in our time is to rule out the supernatural; to deny miracles, merely because we cannot understand them. God is thus politely bowed out of doors. In fact, however, the logical conclusion from the visible facts of life and history is not agnosticism, but faith. The case of the blind beggar is precisely paralleled by that of Nicodemus, who, bewildered by the statement of Jesus as to regeneration, cried, "How can these things be?" The answer was, "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit of God."

The next step of the blind man on his way truthward brings him face to face with the relation of Jesus to his case. The Pharisees, overwhelmed by irrefutable testimony, were driven to concede the miracle, but they were not willing to allow that Jesus

had any hand in it. "Give God the glory," they said; "this Jesus is a sinner; since he has broken the Sabbatic Law." But the man was not satisfied; he could not ignore Jesus, and, as was natural under the circumstances, was eager to know more about him.

The little that he did know served but to stimulate his desire. At first, in answer to the question of the Pharisees, "Who is he that opened thine eyes?" he could only say, "A man named Jesus did it." On being pressed a little closer, "What sayest thou of him that he hath opened thine eyes?" he replied, "He is a prophet"; that is, a teacher having his commission from God. But when questioned further still, he affirmed that the healer must be "of God"; that is, in vital relation with God. All this indicates that he was a sound inductive reasoner. The "marvellous thing" must somehow be accounted for; and nothing could account for it but the power of God.

The same line of argument was pursued by Napoleon in his historic conversation with General Bertrand: "I know men," he said, "and I tell you that Jesus was not a mere man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between him and the founders of empires; but there is none. His birth and the history of his life, the profundity of his doctrine which grapples with the mightiest problems, everything is for me a mystery insoluble, plunging me into reflections which I cannot escape. What a master have we here! In his conflict with kings and empires I see no army, but a mysterious energy; no rallying sign but the common faith in the mysteries of the cross. You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests and of the enthusiasm which they kindled in the hearts of their

soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army devoted to his memory? Can you conceive of Cæsar governing Rome from the silence of a mausoleum? Such is the mystery of the Christian invasion and conquest of the world. Whose is the army which for eighteen centuries has protected the Church from the storms which have threatened to engulf it? Cæsar, Alexander, Charlemagne and I have founded empires; but on what did we rest the creations of our genius? On force. Jesus alone founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him. Have I so inspired multitudes that they would die for me? Now that I am at St. Helena, alone, chained upon this rock, who fights for me? Where are my courtiers in my misfortunes? Where are the friends who win empires for me? Ah, no, Bertrand, I did wrong in placing you in command of my army, unless you perceive that Jesus is God."

The blind beggar in his stumbling way was thinking along the same line. To account for the miracle that had been wrought upon him he walks in the same path that we must needs pursue in explaining the march of Jesus through the ages. The miracles are one and the conclusion is one, to wit, the divinity of Christ.

The man who had charge of the execution on Golgotha saw in the victim whom he led forth to execution only "a man called Jesus." But later on, as he gazed upon the patient sufferer on the middle cross, he was moved to say, "This was a righteous man." And when the tragedy was over, reviewing all, he was constrained to say, "Verily, this was the Son of God!"

And now we come to the blind man's creed. He had been cast out by the Pharisees; excommunicated with "bell, book and candle." And it is written, "Jesus found him." Oh, blessed seeking Son of God! He is ever seeking the homeless and hopeless, the lonely and lost. And to this man he said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The answer was, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" And Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee." Then came the response of faith, cordial, immediate, joyous, because the man had been waiting to welcome the truth: "Lord, I believe!" and he worshipped him.

We have thus traced the Evolution of a Creed. This man had felt his way, like one in a labyrinth seeking a far-off gleam. He had "known" some things all along, but now he is prepared to say, "I believe!"

There is a great difference between knowing and believing. One may know much and believe little, and *vice versa.* A man may know that "honesty is the best policy," but unless he is an honest man he does not believe it. A citizen of New York may know that municipal righteousness is a desirable thing, but unless he casts his ballot accordingly he does not believe it. Moses knew, beyond all possibility of doubt or peradventure, that God spoke to him from the burning bush; but he showed that he believed it when, obedient to the divine command, he stood within the halls of Pharaoh, saying, "Thus said the Lord, Let my people go!" The prodigal knew from the beginning of his downward career that in his father's house there was plenty and to spare, but his knowledge was not vitalized and transmuted into faith until he said, "I will

arise and go!" So the blind man's creed was not reached until he made his confession of faith, "Lord, I believe," and had demonstrated his sincerity by worshipping him.

A large proportion of the people who attend church and hear the preaching of the gospel from time to time are such as were born and bred in an atmosphere of Christian truth. They read their Bibles, know their catechisms and confessions of faith, and are familiar with the evidences of Christianity from beginning to end. All that they need is to accept Christ. The real touchstone of orthodoxy is not knowing but appropriating. The confessor who says, "I believe in Christ," and does not worship and follow him in labor of love and patience of hope, is a mere lay-figure. His creed is as empty as a torn cocoon. His faith is that "faith without works" which, being dead, is not faith at all (James ii, 26). Knowledge must be resolved, amplified and converted into belief, that is, appropriation of truth; as Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you."

The facts of the resurrection of Jesus were all in the possession of Thomas when, in the upper room, he made his famous protest against it. The Marys, Cleopas and his companion, John, James and others of the Eleven had testified to seeing not only the open sepulchre, but the risen Christ. But overwhelming as the evidence was, Thomas would not believe. "I will not believe," he said, "until I have seen for myself, until I have thrust my fingers into the nail-prints." And it was only when Jesus had thus convinced him that he prostrated himself, crying, "My Lord and my

God!" So knowledge becomes faith by vital contact with Christ. It is well to be able to say, "One thing I know"; but life and immortality are in this word, "Lord, I believe!" For by this our lives are interwoven with our Lord's and hid with him in God.

VI

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRIST

In which Jesus puts a group of Biblical Experts in a quandary by requiring them to interpret a prophecy concerning David's Son.

Jesus, to a group of Pharisees: "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is he?"
Pharisees: "The Son of David."
Jesus: "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,
The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?
If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?"—
MATT. xxii, 41-45.

THE ministry of Jesus reached its climacteric on April 3rd of Passion Week. It was the last day of his public teaching and is known as "the Day of Temptations." In the early morning he began to teach the people gathered about him.

The religious leaders at once appeared and raised the question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" We shall find that question running through all the incidents of this historic day. One of "these things" for which the Pharisees demanded the authority of Jesus was his dogmatic presentation of spiritual truth. It was said of him that "he spake not as the scribes"—who were in the habit of supporting their positions by reference to the fathers; as, "Hillel

saith thus," or "Shammai saith so"—but "as one having authority." The word "authority" in this case, *exousia,* means authority from within. The formula of Jesus was not, "Thus saith the Lord," but, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." There never was a teacher who laid his hands so boldly upon the problems of the eternal life as he; and no other ever presumed to speak with this oracular, "I say so!" It was not strange, therefore, that the Scribes and Pharisees, whose monopoly of religious instruction had thus far been unquestioned, should insist upon his credentials: "Who art thou, a mere carpenter, unlettered and unordained, that thou shouldst thus exalt thyself against the Holy Orders?"

Another of the "things" which were challenged by these Doctors of Divinity was the exercise of miraculous power. There was practically no denial of the fact of this power during the lifetime of Jesus. That was scarcely possible, since in every town and village through which he passed there were not only witnesses, but living monuments, of his healing grace; cleansed lepers, dispossessed demoniacs and restored paralytics. It was to be expected, however, that the popular leaders, who had no such supernatural therapeutics at their command, should insist on seeing his diploma. "Show thine authority!" they said. "Produce thy license; where has thou received thy commission to do these things?"

But the one thing, above all others, which provoked the challenge of these Rabbinical censors, was Jesus' assumption of the power of absolution. Once and again he had said to a penitent, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Observe, he did not say "In the name of

God"; but exercised his authority always as from within. They were naturally amazed at such presumption. "He speaketh blasphemy," they said; "who can forgive sins but God only?" And again came the demand for his authority. *Quo warranto?* Hear the little men calling for the canonicals of this great Man. They were graduates of the University of Jerusalem and, behold, he had dwelt with the Father in the primal glory of truth before the world was!

At the first he gave them no answer; or rather, he baffled them with a counter question: "I also will ask you one thing; and if ye answer me, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven, or of men?" And they reasoned within themselves, saying, "If we say, From heaven, he will reply, Why did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, the people who believe in John will rally about him." So they answered, "We cannot tell." And he said, "Neither tell I unto you by what authority I do these things." He had no consideration for mere curiosity on the one hand or for censoriousness on the other. But before this eventful day was over he would definitely meet this challenge, as we shall see, to the satisfaction of all reasonable men.

An intimation of the truth was immediately given in the form of a parable. A certain householder had a vineyard, which he let out to husbandmen and went into a far country. When the time of the vintage drew near, he sent his servants to receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen beat his servants and killed them. And again he sent other servants to demand the fruits;

and they did unto them likewise. Then he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize on the inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him. "What now," asked Jesus, "will the lord of the vineyard do unto those husbandmen?" The people said, "He will miserably destroy them, and let out his vineyard to other men." And Jesus said, with special significance to the Pharisees who were still lingering on the outskirts of the crowd, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? By this they were given to understand plainly that his authority was that of the only-begotten Son, and that they were to be condemned for their rejection of him.

As the day wore on the controversy between Christ and his malignant critics waxed hotter and hotter, the question of his authority being always uppermost. The three parties in the Sanhedrin put their heads together and sent representative delegations to entrap him. The Herodians propounded the question of the Tribute Money, which he disposed of with the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." The Sadducees brought their pettifogging question of the Sevenfold Widow, which he turned with the skill of an accomplished dialectician, rebuking them for "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." The Pharisees approached him with the question of the Greatest Commandment, to which he was pleased to make a

direct answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength." Thus all were foiled at every point.

It was now toward evening; and the Lord himself turned questioner in such a manner as not only to account for his authority but to place his inquisitors in a quandary from which they would find it impossible to extricate themselves. *"What think ye of Christ?" he asked; "whose son is he?" They answered, "The Son of David." He saith unto them, "How then doth David in Spirit (that is, by inspirition) call him Lord, saying, Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?"' And no man was able to answer him.*

Observe, he asked the question but did not elucidate it. Having given them food for reflection he left them to digest it at their leisure. And this, "How, then?" opens up a problem which addresses itself imperatively to the hearts and consciences of all thoughtful men. It was propounded at a supreme moment in the life of Jesus. All the events of this wonderful day had been leading up to it. It is a question not only of the authority of Jesus but of his nature and character as the veritable Son of God. Let us, therefore, turn to Psalm 110, which was his proof-text on this occasion, and learn if possible the meaning of it.

It will be in order to ask David, to begin with, "If the Messiah was to be thy son, how didst thou call him *Adonai;* that is, thy divine Lord?" His answer must be, "I, being in the spirit, heard Jehovah say to my son, 'Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' I saw him place the rod of

divine authority in his hand, saying, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' I saw a great company of soldiers gather at his command, not as mercenaries, but willing in the day of his power, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands like dewdrops from the womb of the morning. I saw Jehovah lift his hand and heard him swear, 'Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.' And to me he said, 'The Lord at thy hand shall strike through kings in the day of his indignation.' All this I saw and heard when in the spirit; and more I know not."

Let us next put the question "How, then?" to the destructive Critics, who profess to be the Scribes or Biblical Experts of our time. Some of them will answer by denying that the one hundred and tenth Psalm is Davidic. What matters it that the title runs, "A Psalm of David"? they deny it. What matters it that all Jewish scholars and commentators even to this day are agreed as to its Davidic origin? they deny it. What matters it that this Psalm, which is more frequently quoted by Christ and his apostles than any other portion of the Old Testament, is invariably ascribed to David? they deny it. What matters it that Jesus affirmed without if or peradventure that David was its author? they deny it. What matters it that the testimony of the Christian Church through all the centuries, as formulated in its creeds and confessions, is to the same purport? they deny it. The ground of such dogmatic denial should be obviously so convincing as to secure an immediate and general assent. What matters it that no such evidence is forthcoming, as their mutual differences show? they still deny it.

Others of the destructive Critics will answer by dis-

puting the Messianic character of the Psalm. It goes for nothing, apparently, that the opposite view is entertained by all except themselves; they do not hesitate calmly and complacently to set their personal opinion against the united testimony of the scholarship of the ages. If forced to admit that David was the author, they still insist that his reference was to one of his own princely sons. But which of them could meet the manifesto? Absalom, the scapegrace? Solomon, "the wise fool"? Was there one of David's immediate or remoter lineage who ever became a priest, and a perpetual priest? Was ever one of them placed in Jehovah's throne and at his right hand, the place of equality with him? Did ever one of them rally an army like the dewdrops of morning and go forth to universal conquest? Nay; surely the meaning lies deeper. The question is not answered yet.

Others, still, of this select coterie of scholars, if forced to admit the Davidic and Messianic character of the Psalm, will deny its reference to Jesus. Nevertheless they profess to believe in him who said, as plainly as words could express it, "I am that One!" It was of precisely such men, the religious leaders of his time who professed to believe in the Messiah and to be looking for him, that he said in words as scathingly denunciatory as they were pathetically tender, "Ye search[1] the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me; and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!" Blind, blind under the noonday sun!

[1] The word ἐρευνᾶτε is alike in the indicative and imperative, and may be rendered either "Search" or "Ye do Search" (JOHN v, 39).

Let us turn now to the Highest Critics and put the question to them. But are there any higher than the Higher Critics? Aye; and of such a character that not even the Higher Critics themselves will hesitate to admit their superior claim; to wit, the three Persons of the ineffable Godhead. It is a matter of surpassing moment that each of these has uttered his voice in authoritative exposition of this Psalm. On the day of our Lord's baptism, the initiatory service by which he was formally inaugurated into the work of his ministry, while he stood in the verge of Jordan the heavens were opened above him and the Father spoke: "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him!"

The testimony of the Son with respect to his own claims as both David's son and divine Lord is equally clear. At the outset of his ministry he entered the home church at Nazareth and opened the Scriptures at the lesson of the day, one of the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah; and having read it, he turned his eyes upon the congregation, saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." A little later he said to a woman who had expressed a desire for the coming of the Messiah, who should relieve her doubts and heal her transgressions, "I that speak unto thee am he!" To the Jews who boasted of their Abrahamic descent, he said "Before Abraham was I AM"; appropriating to himself the mysterious name of Deity which had been announced from the burning bush, "I AM hath sent you." At the close of his ministry when on trial for his life, the High Priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us plainly whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God"; and Jesus answered, in the strongest form of affirmation

which was possible, "Thou hast said"; adding, "I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven!" That the High Priest understood what he meant is evident from the fact that he straightway rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? What think ye?" And his associates answered, "He is guilty of death!" Had Jesus been willing then or subsequently to swerve a hair's breadth from the claim that he was not only David's son, but David's Lord, he might have escaped the penalty; but he died for "making himself equal with God."

The testimony of the Holy Spirit, which was set forth in his baptism by the dove descending upon him, is equally conclusive. As the Executive of the New Economy it has been and is the special and particular function of the Holy Spirit to declare and establish the claims of Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God. He makes himself heard in unmistakable tones in the progressive and cumulative events of history. The lines are ever converging toward the Golden Age in which he, with the rod of power in his hand, shall rule from the river unto the ends of the earth. It was Disraeli, himself of the ancient race of Israel, who reproved his countrymen for their blindness in these words: "The wildest dreams of the Jews as to their Messiah have been realized in the triumphs of Jesus as represented in the realms of Christendom." We say, therefore, that to deny the Spirit's interpretations of this Messianic Psalm, at this period of the world's progress, is to be oblivious of the logic of events and to dispute the sight of one's eyes and the hearing of one's ears.

It remains only to put the question to the great multitude of penitent sinners who believe that they have felt the pardoning grace of the Messiah in their own experience. "How then doth David say, My son is my Lord?" And with united voice they answer on this wise: "I have need of a Prophet who shall be more to me than David's son, since he must instruct me with omniscience and divine authority in the saving truths of the eternal life. I have need of a Priest who shall be more to me than David's son, since he must not only offer a sufficient sacrifice for my sins, but stand in the perpetual exercise of his holy office, interceding at the throne of the heavenly grace. I have need of a King who shall be more to me than David's son, since he must rule with indisputable authority and control my life. I find such a One in Jesus the Christ, who is not only of the lineage of David, but his Lord and mine; my Prophet, Priest and King. O strong Son of God! Omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent! Mighty to save! The kings of the nations cast their crowns before thee! Kings in the province of science, kings of scholarship, kings in the world of spirits, principalities and powers; all cast their crowns before thee, saying, "Thou are worthy to receive honor and glory, dominion and power forever and ever!" Here is no son of David wearing a tinsel crown; but One able to save even to the uttermost all that come unto him. He is both Son of Man and Son of God. He is Son of David and Lord of David and of all who, like David, have sinned against God; as it is written, "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of

Holiness, by his resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1, 4).

To reject him as the God-Man, flesh of our flesh, yet very God of very God, is to sin against both Revelation and the increasing light of the ages. To reject him, in view of the clear testimony of the oracles as well as of the philosophy of history, is to commit the unpardonable sin; since in so doing we reject the only proffer of pardon that has ever been made to sinful men. To reject him is to be guilty of the crime of the husbandmen who slew the Heir Apparent when he came to the vineyard to collect his own.

We conclude, then, that it is not enough to receive Christ as a son of David; that is, to affirm that he is a good man or even the best of men, while rejecting his divine claim. This is to fall short, infinitely and fatally, of the saving truth. The young man who prostrated himself before Jesus, saying, "Good Rabbi, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?" was reproved in these significant terms, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." If this means anything, it means that Jesus rejects, utterly and unreservedly, the adulation of those who regard him as merely the best of men. He is either what he claims to be or else he is obviously far from being the best of men. He will not be "Good Rabbi." Call him God; or rise from thy knees! The only confession of faith which he accepts is that of Peter, who, in answer to the question "Who say ye that I am?" replied, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God!"

A leading Unitarian has said, "Jesus has no divine birth-marks." What, then, are these wounds in his

hands and side? Are they not the fulfilment of all the crimson prophecies of Messiah which run through Scripture from the protevangel to the cross? Are they not the divine sanction of Salvation to the multitude in heaven and on earth who hail him thus, "Thou art worthy to receive honor and dominion and power and glory, because thou was slain for us"? Touch those wounds, friend, as Thomas did, and finding in them the birth-marks of David's Lord, fall before him with the confession, "My Lord and my God!"

VII

THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF MIRACLES

In which certain of the Jews inquiring as to his credentials are referred to his wonderful works.

The Jews, in Solomon's Porch: "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus: "I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."—JOHN x, 22-25.

IT does not seem to have occurred to the cavilers of his time to deny the Miracles of Jesus. The witnesses were so numerous and the evidences so overwhelming that there was no alternative but to admit the fact; the only question being as to what should be done about it.

It was left to people at a remove of some centuries from the scene of action to exploit a different view. This is one of the queer developments of our progressive age; not only a denial of these Miracles as matter of fact, but of their evidential value, Christ to the contrary notwithstanding.

He came into the world to redeem it. To this end he must not only be, but show himself to be, the veritable Son of God. The evidence which he offered was threefold; namely, his character, his preaching and his Miracles.

He affirmed once and again that his Miracles were intended to verify his divine claim. At the beginning of his ministry he went into the synagogue at Naza-

reth and opened the Book of Isaiah where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And having read this clear prophecy of the Miracle-working Christ to the waiting congregation, he added, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

On a later occasion, when John the Baptist, a prisoner in the castle of Machærus, sent some of his followers to inquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" the answer was deferred while he wrought certain Miracles of healing; then he said, "Go tell John what things which ye have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

It is thus manifest that Christ himself put a high estimate on the evidential value of his Miracles. "Believe me," he said, "that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake"; and again, "The works that I do bear witness of me."

It is not, however, to the Miracles of Christ, exclusively, that we address ourselves now, but rather to a consideration of Miracles in general. The man who says, "I do not believe in Miracles," is hasty in his speech. His remark is due to a misapprehension of the question at issue, or rather to a series of misapprehensions, which it is our present purpose to point out.

1. There is a misunderstanding at the outset *as to the Definition of a Miracle;* the supposition being that it it something opposed to nature and in contravention of law. It is nothing of the sort.

The primitive meaning of the word "Miracle" is simply a wonderful thing; the root being *miror,* that is, "I wonder." In this sense the world is full of Miracles; there is no end of "things which cannot be found out."

The reason why we wonder at anything is because it is unfamiliar. Ice on the Congo River would be a Miracle to the natives, because they have never seen it. The budding of a tree in one's dooryard would be as wonderful as the budding of Aaron's rod, if the good man of the house had never before witnessed it.

In the technical sense, a Miracle is anything which bears the mark of the supernatural. The part of the hand that wrote on the wall of Belshazzar's palace was the visible token of a Miracle, since it was so far out of the ordinary that it could not be explained by reference to any known law.

2. The denial of Miracles is due also in a measure to *a wrong theory of the world,* to wit, that it is a self-evolved ball rolling automatically in space.

If God and the supernatural and everything but the world itself could be ruled out in this manner, a Miracle would of course be impossible in the nature of the case. But this is not so.

The old Colonial clock in your hallway is in evidence at this point. Let us stand before it and observe how Miracles thrust themselves upon us. Suppose I ask, "Who made the clock?" Do you answer, "It never was made; it was evolved from a sun-dial?"

The mere suggestion provokes a smile. Is it less impossible that our world came into being that way? The only alternative is the Miracle of Creation. Suppose I ask, again, "What makes the clock go?" You answer, "I wound it up, and it runs of itself for a certain time." Here the analogy fails, since the Maker of the world claims to uphold all things by the word of his power. In this upholding you have the perpetual Miracle of Providence. But suppose again that, seeing your clock is gaining time, I ask, "What will you do with it?" You answer, as you turn the hands backward "I regulate it in this way." There is the ever-recurring Miracle of Divine Interposition. The normal procession of the hands is from left to right, and behold, you have turned them the other way! This is apparently a violation of the law of the clock; really it is the interposition of a higher law, that is, of the human will. The clock was constructed with this possibility in view. Now God is said to have done this very thing on one occasion, when the sun stood still upon Gibeon. You say, "That is a mere fable." Do you mean to intimate, then, that you can do with your chronometer what God cannot do with his? In that case we are reminded of what Jesus said to the cavilers who called in question the miracle of the resurrection, "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God."

3. A further mistake is made in assuming that *Natural Science covers the whole realm of knowable things.*

In fact science has to do only with the operation of certain laws within the province of nature, as evidenced by the physical senses. It can neither deny nor affirm

aught as to supernatural; since it takes cognizance of only visible and tangible things. It can guess, but guesses do not count. Science is from *Scire,* meaning, "To know." An argument ceases to be scientific when it deals with anything but facts.

There are two spheres of research, nature and the supernatural. For the investigation of facts within the realm of the supernatural we are endowed with a sixth sense, that is, faith. This is defined to be "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Here is where the problem of the Miracle enters; and natural science is, in the nature of the case, unable to solve it. A believer in the supernatural is guided by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. The processes here are not verifiable by the physical senses, though their conclusions may be. The hand that was seen writing on the banquet hall of Belshazzar was a fact beyond question, a visible fact of which natural science could take cognizance, though it could not account for it. At this juncture faith comes in. It follows the hand up to the invisible arm, and the arm to the unseen but real personality which it calls God; and from God, as a postulate, it proceeds to affirm all the great spiritual verities which center in him.

The facts thus revealed are as real as those which rest on the testimony of the physical senses, though in a different and larger sphere. It is wholly unreasonable to deny a supernatural thing because we cannot see or touch it. We do not require one of the physical senses to do the work which is properly assigned to another one. We do not insist on seeing a musical chord, or hearing an apple, or tasting a landscape. It is equally

unreasonable to expect the five physical senses to do the work of the sixth sense, which is specially designed to apprehend spiritual things. The truths of the unseen world are as veritable and as verifiable as those of nature. God is as real as a mountain, though "no man hath ever seen God." Conversion is as real as the tacking of a ship, though no man can say of it, "Lo, here!" or "Lo, there!" And the evidence in one case is as real as in the other, and just as convincing to a thoughtful man.

4. The next mistake is in *the assumption that "Miracles are impossible."* How can that be proven? The The objector's say-so does not make it so. The familiar fling at ministers for their habit of dogmatizing may well be shifted to those who make this assertion with the gravity of Sir Oracle.

This is the tone of Hume's argument against miracles on the ground that they lie without the sphere of human experience. Huxley admits that this mode of reasoning collapsed long ago. Allowing that it proves anything, it proves too much. If nothing can be true which does not fall within the sphere of experience, then there can be nothing new, no invention and no discovery. A hundred years ago, when it was proposed to introduce illuminating gas into London, Sir Walter Scott said, "There is a fool in London who proposes to light the city with smoke!" He was simply repeating the argument of Hume, that the thing which has not been, cannot be. At about the same time Dr. Lardner in the House of Commons "proved," in like manner, that a steamship could not cross the Atlantic; and behold, he had scarcely taken his seat before "The Savannah" came steaming into

the port of Liverpool. It is thus that the argument from experience breaks down. The story of the Swimming Axe in the Second Book of Kings used to provoke a smile in some quarters; but iron steamships are now floating over all the seas. Time was when a man would have been laughed at for claiming that he could throw his voice a mile, yet only yesterday I took down the receiver of my telephone and held conversation with a friend in Indiana. Why should it be thought preposterous for a man of Macedonia to call to Paul across the Hellespont, "Come over and help us!" when to-day you can stand at Cape Cod and shout an arrest to a vessel in mid-ocean? It is obvious, therefore, that the height of folly is reached when one denies the possibility of anything on the mere ground that neither he nor any other has ever seen it.

5. We note a further mistake in *the assertion that Miracles do not rest on Evidence.*

It is true, as already intimated, that they do not rest on the evidence of the physical senses, except as to their visible results. But they rest on faith; and faith is both "substance" and "evidence." If a man refuses to exercise his sixth sense, of course he cannot expect to apprehend the things which lie beyond the province of his finger tips.

On the shore of Lake Gennesareth in the early morning a group of fishermen were engaged in earnest conversation as to a singular event which had occurred in the night. A storm, such as had rarely been known even on that boisterous lake, had been raging furiously, when, on a sudden, it subsided and there was a great calm. They had never seen the like before and could not account for it. Just then a little boat pushed

ashore and a company of fishermen disembarked, who had been out in the storm. They joined the others, and, hearing the discussion, said, "We were there and know precisely how the thing occurred. At the very climax of the storm, when we were in mortal terror, our Master stretched out his hands and said, 'Peace, be still!' and instantly the waves obeyed him!" The other fishermen might refuse to believe this; but they were scarcely in a position to enter a dogmatic denial, inasmuch as they were not on the premises, while James and Peter and John were there and saw it. The fact itself was indisputable; the only question being as to the relation of Jesus to it. If facts are to be verified by testimony, is it not obvious that the witnesses in this particular case had the best of the argument? If their testimony is to be invalidated, it devolves upon the deniers to account for the phenomenon in some other way. It is not enough to say, "We do not know;" nor is it satisfactory merely to say, "We have seen strange things to-day."

The same is true of the greatest Miracle of all, that is, the resurrection of Christ. Here is a simple question of evidence. There were hundreds of witnesses who testified that they saw Jesus after he had arisen from the dead. There were more than five hundred who saw him at once. The character of these witnesses was not, and never has been, impugned. They were reputable people, many of them so deeply convinced of the truth of their testimony that they sealed their confession with their blood. The fact that Christ appeared repeatedly after his Resurrection was one which they had verified with their eyes; but the Miracle itself, his power over death, must be received by

faith. The evidence is so overwhelming that Blackstone, the greatest of authorities on the validity of evidence, affirmed that the Resurrection of Christ is as incontrovertibly demonstrated as any fact that ever occurred in the history of the world. If the case were called in court and these witnesses, by hundreds, were to file in and bear individual testimony as to what their eyes had seen, no living man would presume to stand in the court room and in the total absence of rebutting evidence, affirm "It is not so," or "It cannot be so," or even, "I do not believe it."

6. And again it is a grave mistake *to charge those who believe in miracles with Credulity.*

Faith is not credulity; it is belief on evidence as to spiritual things. If there is any credulity it is on the part of those who, despite the evidence, refuse to accept the facts. It is conceded that it is not so easy for men in a physical environment to accept the facts of the unseen world as it is to accept those which can be seen with fleshly eyes; on the other hand, it is claimed that it is easier to accept than to reject them. Think for a moment of the stupendous credulity of one who refuses to accept the testimony of faith. He must believe in a world without a Creator to account for it, or a Providence to preside over it! He must believe in law without a Lawgiver, design without a Designer, a machine without a Mechanic, effects without a Cause, mysteries innumerable without a solution, and in the utter untrustworthiness of some hundreds of millions of living and respectable witnesses who say, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you!" And the only excuse which can be offered by those who take this position is, that they have

never seen or touched these otherwise indubitable things!

If we stood together at the foot of Mount Washington and heard some one say, "Time was when the sea rolled over yon towering height," our impulse would be to answer, "Impossible!" But going up the mountain we should find evidence enough; the seashells at our feet would make the fact perfectly clear. And we should find it harder then to reject the statement than it was previously to accept it. So we say to those who refuse to believe in Miracles, "Come up with us into the spiritual province where the evidence can be seen and you will be convinced." To remain at the foot of the mountain, a bondslave of the physical senses, with the facts of the spiritual world just beyond and within easy reach by the exercise of faith, is not the part of wisdom or of common sense.

7. It remains to speak of one other mistake, that is, *the assumption that Miracles are to be found only in the Bible.*

There are miracles in the Old Testament, and they are there for a definite purpose; namely, the verification of spiritual truth. In the New Testament you will find the miracles of Jesus, intended to corroborate his divine claims: and the miracles of the Apostles, which were wrought by the special enduement of the Spirit to meet the demands of the infant Church. These miracles ceased when they had accomplished their temporary purpose: as the scaffolding is removed when the walls of the building have gone up.

But there are other Miracles, just as supernatural, physically unaccountable and spiritually helpful in these days. Every answer to prayer is a Miracle; and

is so regarded by those who deny the efficacy of prayer on the ground that it presupposes the supernatural. Every conversion is a Miracle, because it marks the interposition of a law higher than nature. If I toss a ball into the air it descends by the force of gravity; but if I catch it in my hand, I arrest the operation of that law. Have I wronged gravitation by introducing the superior influence of the human will? It is precisely so when God saves a man. And also when, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, he sanctifies him. The law of earthly things is decay. A man left to himself hastens on to spiritual death. We use salt, in common life, to arrest decay; and in this we simply supplant the operation of one law by the greater power of another one. So is moral decay arrested by the power of the Spirit of God. The relation of the two laws is indicated by Paul, where he says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The law of the spirit is higher than the law of the flesh; it arrests and supplants it.

It is not denied that Miracles are stumbling-blocks in the way of those who might otherwise accept Christ. But "it must needs be that offences come." The real difficulty is not with Miracles; it lies back of that, in the rejection of God himself. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He who once accepts God must inevitably accept the whole system of truth which centres in him. The moment he consents to use faith in the contemplation of spiritual things, he is bound to perceive not only God, but God manifest in Christ, with the atonement and all truths radiating from it.

The Children of Israel are said to have been unable to enter the land of promise "because of their unbelief." The whole world of the supernatural awaits the man who is willing to exercise faith; but without faith he is excluded from it. He lives like an eagle tethered to a stake: he is a bondman in the narrow confines of the five physical senses. He denies the Bible only because he is compelled by his position to deny the truth of all spiritual things. He denies Christ and holds immortality with a slight tenure and doubts his own birthright for the same reason. What does he need? He needs the vision that Luther caught halfway up Sancta Scala when the light burst upon him, and he cried, "The just shall live by faith!" Aye; faith is the supreme function of the spiritual man. By faith he enters the land of promise. And without faith it is impossible for any man to please God.

VIII

INTOLERANCE

In which a devoted but narrow-minded friend of Jesus is taught the lesson of true liberalism.

John: "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us."

Jesus: "Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."—MARK ix, 38-40.

THE American Federation of Labor has, after long and careful consideration, issued a formal condemnation of the "Open Shop." This action was induced by the fact that the authorities at Washington retained in their employ a journeyman printer who declined to join the Union. We rejoice that the controversy has been brought to a head in this manner, since the situation was getting to be utterly tiresome and intolerable. It is a distinct gain to know precisely where we stand. As to the right of workmen to organize for mutual support there is no difference of opinion; but when the Organization sets out deliberately to wrong the weak and defenceless, the soul of every self-respecting man revolts at it. The position taken by the American Federation is an interference with everybody's rights. It is an interference with the rights of the Public, who are not to be permitted

henceforth to say what kind of service it wants or whom it will have to perform it. It is an interference with the rights of Union workmen, whom it reduces to such abject servitude that they are no longer able to claim their souls as their own. It is an interference with the rights of Non-union workmen, to whom it says that, except under certain tyrannical conditions, they shall not work at all. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Trades-unionism; and, whatever the duly constituted courts may say about it, the people, who are the Court of Final Appeal, will spew it out of their mouths.

But the incident referred to is especially significant as furnishing an illustration of a spirit of intolerance which, in one form or another, seems to be woven into the very warp and woof of human nature. The truth set forth in the fable of the Dog in the Manger is as old as the history of man, or more properly as the history of sin; for the essence of sin is selfishness. Its ever-recurring question is, "Am I my brother's keeper?" the true answer to which is found in the vernacular form of the Golden Rule, "Live and let live."

It was a memorable day in the history of Israel when seventy Elders were set apart to assist Moses in the government. The ceremony of ordination occurred at the Tabernacle, whither they had been summoned to receive the enduement of the Spirit. At the supreme moment, when "the Spirit rested upon them and they prophesied," a young man came running to say that two of the chosen number, Eldad and Medad, who had for some reason been unable to reach the Tabernacle, were engaged in prophesying in a remote

part of the camp. "My lord Moses," cried Joshua, "forbid them!" What right, indeed, had these men to be holding a conventicle of their own? But Moses thought differently: "Are ye jealous for me?" he answered. "Would God that all his people were prophets and that he would put his spirit upon them all!" It was the pronouncement of a magnanimous, far-seeing, just and godly man. He had no sympathy with the self-opinionated exclusiveness of Trades-unionism in the service of God.

If there is any country on earth in which this intolerant spirit should be under the ban, it is ours. The fundamental principle of the Republic is laid down in the Preamble of our Declaration of Independence, where it is affirmed that all men are created free and equal and with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. There is not a "ring" or "combine" in existing politics which is not a distinct violation of that manifesto of civil equality. And the same is true of every movement favoring the centralization of power in the hands of any favored class.

It is proposed, for example, to arrest the tide of immigration which flows so multitudinously toward our shores; and so far as this may be necessary to prevent our country from becoming the dumping-ground of nations beyond the sea, well and good. But no restrictions must be made which could affect our historic position as a refuge for the oppressed of the whole earth, or which would have excluded our own penniless and persecuted forefathers.

It is proposed, also, to place restrictions upon the suffrage; and this too is necessary so far forth as to

close our doors against any and all who by reason of crime, political heresy or incurable dependency would be burdensome or inimical to our national life. But our fundamental principle of equality involves the corollary of universal suffrage, or, to use Gladstone's phrase, "manhood suffrage"; by which is meant, not "one man, one vote," but that the franchise shall be accessible to all. Let any number of restrictions be placed upon it; a property qualification, an educational qualification, a moral qualification; the ballot must still remain within the reach of all. The citizenship of this Commonwealth is worth climbing for; but it must not be put so high that the humblest may not attain to it.

The most startling proposition, however, in behalf of national exclusion, has recently been made by the Governor of Mississippi, who in his Annual Message declares for the closing of the public schools against the black people who constitute a majority of the population of that state, on the ground that they belong to "an inferior race." This is obviously at odds with our constitutional provision that no discrimination shall be made against any class on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. It is irreconcilably and fatally at odds with the genius of our government in its championship of human equality and the rights of man.

An outcropping of the same intolerant spirit is seen in the distinctions which prevail in social life. There ought to be, and is of necessity, an "aristocracy" among us: but certainly it is not an aristocracy of parvenus, and still more certainly not of tuft-hunters. It is based on no adventitious conditions whatsoever,

but absolutely and only on personal merit. It is an aristocracy of character; and character is never exclusive, but splendidly tolerant. Character keeps open house; its latchstring is always out. Character never says "Keep thy place," but, "Come in and sup with me." Our friends beyond the sea are fond of saying of Americans that they "dearly love a lord"; but this is true only of a limited and by no means the most respected class of our people. The social philosophy of Robert Burns is good enough for all true Americans:

Is there for honesty poverty
  Wha hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by;
  We dare be poor for a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
  Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
  The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine;
  A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might—
  Guid faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a 'that and a' that,
  Their dignities, and a' that;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
  Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that—
When man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

It is our present purpose, however, to lay special emphasis on certain manifestations of the exclusive spirit in our religious life. The Church is a divine ordinance, having been instituted by Christ. Its name, *ekklesia,* is suggestive of exclusion; but it must be observed that the Church is distinctly a voluntary body and its boundary lines are such as to exclude none who choose to enter in. It is an association of people "called out" of the world and "separated" from it; but the line of separation is that of a simple faith which is possible to all. All who are arrayed with Christ are counted in; all who are arrayed with Anti-Christ are, by their own motion, counted out. There is no disposition on the part of Christ, and there should be no disposition on the part of those who officially represent him, to exclude any from the benefits of the gospel or from the high privileges of the Church of God.

The supreme violation of this hospitable spirit is represented by "The Establishment."

You will find intolerance in its glory wherever a particular denomination is under the patronage of the State. In conversation with a Presbyterian minister in a small hamlet in Scotland, my casual reference to a ministerial brother in the next town was met by the

remark, "Aye; he's well enough; but the ministers of the Establishment have small dealing with those of the Free Kirk." So hard dies the antipathy of the Jew to the Samaritan! This Trades-union man was, forsooth, the only Churchman; and those who were of another way of thinking, however Christian they might be, were "dissenters" or "nonconformists"; and their places of assemblage were "chapels" or "meeting houses." This is not to say that all members of a State Church are so unfraternal, only that the system naturally fosters exclusiveness.

If we congratulate ourselves that this particular form of intolerance is alien to our American life, we are bound to confess ourselves blameworthy in other ways. Here, for example, is a scholastic coterie which arrogates to itself the privilege of passing judgment on the validity and integrity of the Scriptures. It is made up chiefly of theological professors, who, forgetful of the fact that "no Scripture is of private interpretation," insist that the people shall keep hands off until they shall have determined what portion is true and what not. The protest against this arrogant "hold-up" is not on the part of the people only (John vii, 49), but on the part of a multitude of eminent scholars who with all the force of sound logic and learning dissent from it. And their dissent is reinforced by the word of Christ himself, who said, "Search the Scriptures"; or, "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me."

Sacerdotalism is another form of the same narrow-mindedness.

Doubtless there is a divine call to the ministry.

Christ set apart twelve men whom he designated as "Apostles," and whom he endowed with singular spiritual gifts. But it is difficult to think and impossible to prove that those singular gifts and endowments have been in any wise transmitted through the ages. The ministry is set apart now, as ever, for the preservation of due order and the administration of the sacraments and discipline in the Church; but so far as service goes, that is free for all. The clergy do not constitute a Fishermen's Union; or, if so, this Union utters no caveat against those who are outside of it. The right of Christ himself to preach was challenged by the ministers of his time who sent a "walking delegate" to say to him, as he was speaking in the Temple Porch, "By what authority doest thou these things?" In other words, they wanted to see his diploma, his certificate of licensure, his ordination papers. No man who has caught the true spirit of Jesus can ever speak in that way. His attitude will rather be that of Paul, who said, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. i, 15-18).

It remains to say that Sectarianism in every form whatsoever is intolerance.

I do not say denominationalism; for it is a true proverb, "Fences make good neighbors." But sectarianism speaks on this wise: "The Temple of the

Lord are we"; and, as a rule, the more insignificant the sect, the more exclusive is its spirit. There are small bodies of Calvinists and "True-Seed Baptists" in the mountains of Tennessee and the Carolinas who hold that they monopolize the benefits of grace. A gentleman said to a Highland woman of this way of thinking, "I fear, Janet, you are of the opinion that nobody will be saved but you and your minister." She answered, "Aye; an' whiles I hae my doots of the minister."

The teaching of Jesus Christ is the very opposite of this. He said to the religious leaders of his time, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii, 13). It was a rebuke to the spirit of Trades-unionism in religion. The picture is that of a "strike" at the gateway of heaven, the Pharisees saying, "We will not, and you shall not."

And Christ found it necessary to administer a like rebuke to his own disciples. John, the Apostle of Love, the last in whom we should expect to see such narrowness, came to him, saying, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." And Jesus said, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me" (Mark ix, 38, 39). Now this is not to say that there is no line of demarcation to be drawn between those who accept Christ and those who reject him. On the other hand there is a profound emphasis on those words, "In my name." But the reproof is addressed to the suggestion that any

are to be excluded from service because "they follow not us." Blessed be God, there are multitudes who do not call themselves by our denominational names who love Christ in sincerity and are casting out devils "in his name"; there are Greek Christians, Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians, all alike of the family of Christ. Let them gang their ain gait; and may the heavenly benediction be upon them all!

The whole tenor of the teaching of Christ, intended for his people through all time, is against the exclusive spirit. His word "Come" is addressed to all sorts and conditions of men; and his other great word "Go" is addressed to all who follow him. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature! Go out into the highways and hedges! Go to the uttermost parts of the earth; and constrain others to come in!"

How difficult it was for him to persuade his disciples that he meant this. They were offended with him for talking with a woman of Samaria. They were offended with him for receiving the kind offices of "a woman who was a sinner." They were offended with him when he went up into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to minister to those who were not of the household of Israel.

He led the way when he said, "Go," but, even after his crucifixion, his disciples failed to grasp his meaning: they tarried in Jerusalem until Stephen's death drove them out. Then "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles; and went everywhere preaching the Word." The apostles still remained in the Holy City, not ready yet to welcome the Gentiles. A little later

we find Peter at Joppa, the seaport of Jerusalem, where a vision came to him of a sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. And a voice said, "Arise, Peter, slay and eat." He answered, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The Voice said, "What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common." At that moment a knocking at the door below gave a clew to the vision; for a Gentile Centurion stood there, inquiring after "Simon, which is surnamed Peter," and summoning him to a world-wide ministry. "Of a truth," said Peter, "I now perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Our religion is, by these tokens, the broadest, most inclusive, comprehensive, far-reaching, magnanimous religion that ever was known or dreamed of. It is the very antithesis of class prejudice and bigotry. It requires one thing and one thing only of the penitent sinner, to wit, a frank, honest, unreserved acceptance of Christ; that given, all the rest is "Go, bring others in!" There is room in the Christian Church for all sorts of Christians, and all such are one in Christ. There is room for all sorts of workers; and all are expected to co-operate for him. There are more believers in the world than we think. Many hypocrites and heretics, no doubt, but a great multitude of true followers of Christ. What is this that he says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, that there may be one flock, one shepherd"?

It is a wide world that we are living in, and there is room for all to walk without jostling and to work without let or hindrance. The harvest truly is great and the laborers so few! Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, not that he would exclude any from the field, but that he would bring multitudes into it. Not that he would multiply the number of those that "follow us," but the number of those that cast out devils "in his name." The right to serve is the supreme privilege of the Christian life. *Ich dien* is a princely motto; and all true followers of Christ may bear it embossed upon their shields whether they speak our shibboleths or not. There are those among the Israel of God who to this day "have no dealings with the Samaritans"; but the Good Samaritan nevertheless goes on with his gracious work on The Bloody Way.

There is no place in the economy of the Gospel for envy and jealousy, bigotry and exclusiveness. The elder brother of the Prodigal, contemplating with black looks the unconventional merry-making in the Father's house, cuts but a poor figure in the domestic annals of the Church. Let him find his seat at the table and join in the general rejoicing over the return of every sinner from the far country.

IX

THE LARGER CHRIST

In which a fond mother is strangely used to teach the doctrine that Salvation is for all.

A Woman of Syro-Phœnicia: "*Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.*"

Jesus makes no answer.

The Disciples: "*Send her away; for she crieth after us.*"

Jesus: "*I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*"

The Woman: "*Lord, help me.*"

Jesus: "*It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.*"

The Woman: "*Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.*"

Jesus: "*O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt.*"—MATT. XV, 21-28.

IN the north country, among the hills of Syria, dwelt a woman in the school of sorrow. She was a lone woman, it would seem, with but one fledgling in her nest. Her only child was an invalid, "possessed of an unclean spirit." The mother's love—a love that many waters could not quench—was betrayed in the fond title, "my little daughter." But love kept company with shame in solitude; for hers was a nameless sorrow.

A picture by a famous artist represents a woman sitting on a ledge of rocks beside the sea, in an atti-

tude of hopelessness, staring into the distance with eyes of stony grief. Beside her hovers the Angel of Hope, touching the strings of a lute; but the woman sees not, hears not. So was it with this Syro-Phenician mother; the music of consolation was not for her.

Her heart was breaking; and there was none to help. The physicians whom she consulted pronounced the case incurable. There was no relief in prayer; for her god was Baal, the god of the Phenicians, the god of the Cold Eyes. In vain would she lay her sorrow before him; "there was no voice nor answer nor any that regarded."

It was rumored that down in Galilee a prophet was going to and fro among the villages healing all manner of diseases. There were commercial travelers—for at this time Phenicia was the most wealthy and enterprising of commercial nations—who had met him in Galilee; and wonderful were the tales they told of his miraculous cures, the opening of blind eyes, cleansing of lepers, casting out of evil spirits. But so far as this woman could learn, his benefactions were confined to the people of Israel, whose Messiah he claimed to be.

It happened just then that Jesus, wearied by the work of his Galilean ministry and persecuted by the ruling faction whom he had mortally offended, came up into Syria and sought retirement in the obscure town where this afflicted mother dwelt. She heard of his presence and straightway sought him out. It was a forlorn hope. She knew that, as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, she was without claim; but her great love constrained her. "O Lord, thou Son of David," she cried, "have mercy on me and heal my

little daughter!" It was the appeal of quenchless love and baffled hope. What could "the Son of David" be to her? It was as when a sailor in mid-ocean waves a signal of distress and calls to a ship passing afar off.

I. "And he answered her not a word."

Why? Was it by reason of indifference? Oh, no; he always heeded the cry of the suffering; his was the gentlest heart that ever beat. He was surely not indifferent to that "me" of her appeal, in which she so pathetically identified herself with her ailing child. Was it then because of inability to help? Not so. There was no limit to his power; he was fond of applying his divine skill to the most desperate cases. It is recorded that when he passed through the villages the people brought out their sick and laid them in couches along the way; and "he healed them all." No, these were not the grounds of his strange silence. He had an ulterior purpose. The healing of this woman's daughter was not a matter of supreme moment; he fully intended to grant the request, but merely as a relatively unimportant thing; an incident in the pathway of his kindness toward her.

The woman's faith, as manifest in her appeal, was but a feeble, rudimental, nascent thing. It was "faith like a grain of mustard seed"; that is, small but with large possibilities in it. He would correct and foster it. In calling him "Son of David" she disclosed the fact that she wholly misconceived the scope of his ministry of mercy. Her utmost hope, as an outsider, was that some of the droppings of his gracious ministry might fall on her. He would teach her that he was no provincial Christ, that his mission was not

restricted to an insignificant tribe of people dwelling in a small Province in a remote corner of the earth. No such "pent-up Utica" confined his powers. He desired to be known as the Friend and Saviour of all nations and all sorts and conditions of men. He perceived that her mind was open, as fruitful soil, to receive the truth. He would not only gladden her soul by granting her immediate desire, but would reveal himself aright and thus kindle in her a saving faith which would open all heaven to her view and make her a true child of God.

The disciples, however, had no conception of this purpose. As she continued her frantic appeals, they said, "Send her away; she crieth after us;" that is, heal her and let her go. It would be an easy matter, they knew, for him to cast the evil spirit out of her daughter, and thus be rid of her importunity. Many of the humanitarians of our time reason in the same way. "The poor and the suffering are all about us. Let us give them prescriptions from the free dispensary, and let them go; give them bread to satisfy their hunger, and let them go; give them physical comfort, manual training, secular help and encouragement, and let them go."

But this is not the philosophy of Christ. He knows that deep down in the soul of the average man there is a spiritual cry that food and raiment can never satisfy. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked and allow them to pass out into eternity ignorant of their divine birth and noble destiny and unaware of the provision divinely made for their deliverance from sin and the just penalties that follow it, is but a grim travesty of kindness and a mockery of human need.

Nay, not "Heal them and let them go," but, Hold them in the healing until their sin-stricken souls shall be made whole and gladdened by the message of life.

Jesus was silent not because he was indifferent to the appeal of this woman or unwilling to answer it, but because he intended to do a hundredfold more than she had dreamed of receiving from him.

II. In answer to the suggestion of his disciples, he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Now, this was precisely according to their way of thinking. I imagine John saying quietly to Peter, "We should have known it. Of course he could not extend his benefactions to this Gentile woman; since he is exclusively the Messiah of the Jews."

This was the prevailing view. Jesus himself had said, "Salvation is of the Jews." Were they not "the chosen people"? Had not the Oracles been committed to them—the Oracles in which were enshrined the age-old prophecies of his coming? Was he not known distinctively as the "Hope of Israel"? They looked for him to rebuild their shattered fortunes and restore their political glory. Why should the Gentiles think of sharing the privileges which were thus intended to be the exclusive right of the Jews?

Now, while our Lord is engaged in teaching the Syro-Phenician woman, he will rid his disciples, also, of this false conception of his mission. He will show them that the privilege of Israel did not consist in any exclusive monopoly of the evangel, but in the responsibility of passing the great prophecy along the ages until the Messiah should come to be a Saviour for all the children of men.

The words, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," were not an expression of the mind of Jesus, but of the opinions entertained by his disciples. They were spoken in irony; and the woman overhearing them apparently detected the ironic note. The tone of his voice, the kindly light in his eyes, betrayed him. She continues her appeal, but the light is beginning to break upon her. No longer does she address him as the Son of David; but, "O Lord, have mercy upon me!" she cries; and falls down and worships him. Here is a step in advance. Her heart is teaching her. The process is indeed a severe one, this education of her simple faith; not unlike an operation for cataract of the eyes. The film is not yet removed, but there is a little light. The operation is not over; there is further need of the scalpel, and, ah, the pain of it!

III. Hear him: "It is not meet," he says to her, "to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

Here is a distinct blow. I imagine Peter at this point turning to John with the remark, "It is just as I supposed; as the 'minister of the circumcision' he can have nothing to do with her. Were she a Jew, he would heal her daughter as a matter of course; but she is an outsider and an alien. He belongs to us."

What then? Woman's wit to the rescue! Mother's love to the rescue! Dawning hope to the rescue! A great dialectician does this woman prove herself to be. "Aye, Lord, but even the dogs have the crumbs that fall from the children's table." What but love immeasurable could thus have moved a humble woman to measure swords with the Mighty One?

And love conquers. He gives her the freedom of his treasure city. Hear his answer, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Here the curtain falls. She went away laden with the blessings of grace. Her feet were winged with hope as she sped to her home, where she found her daughter "healed of her infirmity and laid upon the bed." It needs no effort of the imagination to hear her saying, as she bends over the convalescent, "Little daughter, Jesus hath healed thee! He spake sternly, indeed; but his eyes were the kindest and his voice the sweetest on earth. Never was such a friend and helper. What shall we render unto him?"

But this was not the only or largest of her blessings. She took with her a new thought of prayer, which was quite in line with the Master's teaching, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." It is a lesson for all parents who have been pleading, years and years, for wayward sons and daughters. Pray on, pray on! In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not. The Lord may tarry in his answering; but his promise is sure, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The times and the seasons are indeed with him. He may put our faith to a sore trial; but he will not fail us. His orchard is full of trees, and all of them are fruit trees. We plead for apples, but we must wait until his apples are ripe. Our prayers are instant; "Now! Now!" we cry; but his answers are all dated with the fulness of time. Therefore, wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart.

"My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold."

But the crowning blessing which this woman received with her was a new conception of Christ. She had learned, at length, how the Vine grows over the wall. No longer could she think of Jesus as merely the Messiah of the Jews. No more could she appeal to him as one afar off. She had made the acquaintance of "the larger Christ"; and so must we.

Let us not suppose that the church has an exclusive right in him; since the incidental blessings of his grace fall even upon those who reject him. He is not a Christ for the wise or the respectable alone; nay, behold him "eating with publicans and sinners." The drunkard and the drab are included in his mighty plan and purpose of salvation; and the same promise which comes to us is extended to them: "He that believeth hath everlasting life." He is not the Christ of Christendom exclusively, but of the regions beyond, as well; the regions that lie in darkness and the shadow of death. And woe be to us, to whom the oracles are entrusted, if we carry not his message, "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved!"

It is written that after this interview with this Syro-Phenician woman, Jesus "departed from thence and came nigh to the Sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain and sat down; and great multitudes came unto him, having with them the lame and blind, the dumb and maimed, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them all; insomuch that they glorified God." So does he sit upon his throne in heaven, while vast processions of the redeemed throng through the gates. They come from the east and west, from the

north and the south, and sit down with him in the kingdom of God. There are Jews and Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free. Oh, this universal salvation! This cosmopolitan Christ! Would that we might apprehend him as he is: a Christ without bounds or limitations. His love is like the sea which rolls upon all shores, creeping up into all their bays and estuaries. There is no saying to him, "Thus far and no further"! He is able to save unto the uttermost; and willing as he is able. This is the love that passeth knowledge. Oh, the length and breadth and depth and height of it!

Go ye, therefore, and evangelize all nations. There are numberless souls in "the regions beyond" waiting for the blessings that have made Christendom what it is. Why tarry we in the sheepfolds listening to the bleating of our flocks, when the lost sheep of pagandom are out on the dark mountains? Go ye into the city slums and out into the highways and hedges; follow the footsteps of the Master up into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; seek the wandering to the uttermost parts of the earth! These are the marching orders of our Lord. He came from heaven to seek and save the lost, and to us he said, "As the Father hath sent me into the world, so send I you." Oh, for an enlargement of heart to grasp the glorious gospel of the larger Christ! His blood flowed most freely in streams of salvation. There is blood enough in the fountain to wash away the whole world's sin. Tell it out, O follower of Christ!

"There's a wideness in his mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea."

X

"BLESSED BE DRUDGERY"

In which a cumbered housewife is rebuked for worrying and advised as to the better part.

Martha: "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me."

Jesus: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."—LUKE x, 38-42.

IN the village of Bethany on the slope of Mount Olivet, a mile or two from Jerusalem, was one of the homes where Jesus, himself a homeless man, was made a welcome guest. It was his custom, when in attendance on the great festivals, to sojourn here; going into the city in the morning to preach and returning at the close of day.

The inmates of this home were Simon and Martha, probably his wife, with her brother and younger sister. The head of the household was known as "Simon the Leper," possibly because he had been thus afflicted and Jesus had healed him. As to Lazarus, it will be observed that his name is not mentioned here, while Bethany itself is referred to as "a certain village." No doubt this was due to the hostility which had been provoked by the raising of Lazarus. In John's Gospel, however, the names of the village and of all parties concerned are given. The reason is obvious: John wrote at the close of the first century, when all the

facts might be stated with impunity, since Jerusalem had been destroyed and Bethany itself was in ruins.

It appears that Christ on his round of duties had come to Bethany and was entertained as usual in this favored home. His disciples were with him; some of the townspeople dropped in. He gathered them about him, very likely in the open court of the house, and taught them the things of the kingdom of God.

While this service was going on, the sound of rattling pans and kettles and dishes could be heard from the kitchen near by. Martha, the housewife, was there preparing the dinner; and she was much annoyed by the fact that her sister Mary, having gone in with the congregation, was taking no part with her.

The more she thought about this matter, the more unfair it seemed. She was flushed and excited by the demands of the occasion. The house was full of company, a distinguished guest was being entertained, a dozen things were clamoring to be done at once; and there sat her sister all unconcerned, listening to Christ. She kept her rising anger to herself as long as possible and then ran to Jesus with it. The word rendered "came" is the same which is used of the sudden coming of the Great Day. It suggests that she came hurriedly, briskly, impetuously. It would appear that she broke in upon the service with her complaint, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." The reply was full of tender reproof, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Let it not be supposed that Martha was a wholly

worldly-minded woman. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that she was a true follower of Christ. The fact that she called him "Lord" would seem to indicate that she sincerely desired to obey and serve him. Her Christian character is evidenced, also, by her cordial hospitality. It must be remembered that at this time Jesus was an outlawed man. By his teaching and miracles he had so provoked the hostility of the religious leaders that practically there was a price upon his head. But Martha believed in him and loved him so earnestly that the danger did not appall her. Had he not healed her husband of leprosy? Had he not given her assurance of the pardon of sins? The freedom of her home was, indeed, but a slight return for his kindness.

She showed her devotion to Jesus by her strenuous desire to set the very best before him. He had done so much for the members of her household that nothing was too good for him. In the journal of Queen Victoria it is related that, as she was going through the Highlands, she stopped at a crofter's cottage to rest. The housewife, naturally overwhelmed by the sense of the high honor, pressed all manner of attentions upon her royal guest, and when the brief visit was over, she turned the chair which had been occupied by the Queen to the wall, saying, "Your Majesty, no one shall ever sit in this again, since you have occupied it." No doubt some such feeling as this was in the heart of Martha as she busied herself in preparing the meal for her beloved guest.

And apart from the fact that she was manifestly a Christian, it should be remarked that she was a representative of a most useful class of women. *Die haus-*

frauen; the busy housewives. How should we get on without them? The tidy, industrious, bountiful providers who make our homes the happiest places on earth for us!

You will find the picture of one of them in the words of King Lemuel, in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs: "Who shall find a worthy woman? Her price is far above rubies! She riseth before the break of day to give meat to her household. She girdeth her loins with strength and worketh willingly with her hands. She maketh linen and girdles. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her neighbors say, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

We need not, however, go back through the centuries. The world is full of brave home-keepers; some of them in charge of splendid mansions, others in humbler life, devoting themselves with heroic self-sacrifice to the keeping of the wolf from the door. They live their earnest life without the blare of trumpets. They are content to toil like Browning's Angel who took the place of an apprentice at his bench,

> "He did God's will; to him all one,
> If in the earth or in the sun."

It may be that your mother was such a woman; her face comes up before you now. She is "tidying up" the old home. Perhaps the minister is coming on his "circuit" next Lord's day. She is in the kitchen, making bread, the flour dust on her arms. So busy!

And possibly a little impatient of your presence there. All honor to the diligent housewife! "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates."

But as to Martha, there is something to be said on the other side. To begin with, her housework was ill-timed. She should have waited. She should have known that, however important the preparation of this repast might be, it was still more important just then that she should be at the service listening to what Jesus might say. Had she been reminded of this she would probably have replied, "I haven't time." How many there are who excuse themselves from religious obligation in the same way. Oh, these busy people who never have time! No time to go to church; no time for the prayer meeting; no time to read their Bibles; no time for closet devotions; no time for missionary work; no time to sit at Jesus' feet; no time for anything but grinding like Samson at the mill.

And, further, Martha was "cumbered" by her work. She was anxious and distracted. Wrinkles of care were on her forehead and crow's feet about her eyes. She should have remembered what Jesus said, "Take no anxious thought, saying, What shall we eat? Consider the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field; they fret not, worry not, yet your Father careth for them. Are ye not of much more value than they?"

"Ah, but," she would have said, "some one must be doing these things." No; nobody must be doing them. Work is necessary; but worry never. There is no room on earth for a frown, certainly not for a Christian's frown. Worry never helps, it only hin-

ders. One has but to observe the faces of those who pass along the streets to learn how the world is burdened with over-solicitude. A Frenchman who recently visited New York said, "Every man I meet looks as if he had gone out to borrow trouble." We grow stronger by toil, but fret bows our shoulders and turns us prematurely gray. To work is a duty; to worry is a sin.

It appears, moreover, that Martha was a censorious woman. She bore her burden in the kitchen as long as she could and then bustled away to Jesus with it. She was not merely a fault-finder, but something of a scold withal. It is not going too far to say that probably the younger sister had some reasonable ground of complaint against her. The habit of scolding has darkened the atmosphere of many an otherwise happy home. A fortnight ago a girl of fourteen committed suicide in New York and left a note saying, "When I awoke this morning, father scolded me; and when I went to school, mother scolded me; and because I didn't have my lessons, the teacher scolded me; and there's no use of living, anyway."

The habit of fault-finding had so grown on Martha that, not content with criticising her sister, she must needs speak petulantly to Jesus himself. "Carest thou not," she cried, "that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" And this is the rule; one who allows himself to be habitually critical toward his fellows will be very sure to end by finding fault with Providence. I wonder what such people will do when they get to heaven and find everything just right; the temperature comfortable, the sunlight properly adjusted, their harps in tune, and their halos a perfect fit.

What did Martha need? One thing only. She needed to drop her cares and rest awhile at Jesus' feet. He said, "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen the good part." What did he mean by "the good part"? The word *meris* is the same which is used in the incident of the foot washing, where Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"; and in the division of the seamless robe, where it is said, "The soldiers divided it into four parts, to every one a part"; and again in the last chapter of the Bible: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life." It means a "part and lot" in Christ, a share in the division of his love, a vital interest with him.

In saying that Mary had this "good part," the Lord does not suggest that Martha was without it, only that she did not give it the pre-eminent place. It must so overshadow all that nothing else can be compared with it.

Now this is not to say that meditative piety is the only sort. On the contrary, it is quite possible to err in this direction. There are those who would build tabernacles on the Mount of Vision and abide there, deaf to the cry of the demoniac at the foot of the mountain and blind to fields yellow for the harvest. We sing,

> "Oh, that I could forever sit
> Like Mary at the Master's feet;
> Be this my constant choice,
> My only care, delight and bliss,
> My joy on earth and heaven be this
> To hear the Bridegroom's voice."

But the voice of the Bridegroom is also the voice of the Master, calling us away from dreams and visions, "Go ye into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in!" There is work to be done and work is the great matter in the Christian life. Dreams and visions are helpful to self-culture, but service is in the behalf of others, wherefore, Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." It is well to pray, to read our Bibles and go to church; but these are means to an end, and the end is the conquest of the world for Christ.

The ideal Christian is the Mystic at Work. It is safe to say that, when the Master's teaching at the Bethany home was over, Mary went straightway into the kitchen. And the two sisters, toiling together, must have afforded a striking contrast: One of them flushed and querulous; the other equally busy, but singing in her heart because she had taken "the good part" into the kitchen with her. And her work was all the more thoroughly done because she knew that she loved Christ and she knew that he loved her.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as to God's laws
Makes that and the action fine."

It was four months afterward that, in the same house at Bethany, an incident occurred which put the devotion of Mary to the test. It seems she had a cherished treasure, an alabaster box of precious spikenard; and, as Jesus was teaching, she brought this box of ointment and broke it (as if to indicate that, having served its high purpose, it should thenceforth find no

further use), and anointed his head and feet. The disciples murmured, saying, "What a waste! This ointment might have been sold for two hundred pence (a large amount of money in those days) and given to the poor." But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work on me." So the "good part" finds its fruitage in the "good work"; and the good work finds its end upon him.

The lesson here is particularly for earnest womenfolk. In these days all doors of usefulness are open. Let them enter where they will; but, whether their energies be given to the home life or handicraft or professional work, they are bound under all circumstances, by all considerations of gratitude, to serve Christ every way. It is inconceivable how any woman can withhold her love and service from him. A non-Christian woman is a living incongruity. Think what Christ has done for womanhood! Reflect on the harems of India and the poor women of China and other pagan countries. If the doors of honor and usefulness are open to the women of Christendom, it is because "the Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born" and because the result of his Gospel has been to uplift them into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It is therefore, pre-eminently, the "good part" of all right-thinking women to take Christ as their Saviour and friend and pay their meed of gratitude to him. This is the enduring "part" of life. All else will vanish—personal charms, wealth, gifts and accomplishments; but of this Jesus said, "It shall never be taken away from her."

XI

HOME MINISTRIES

In which a husband, ambitious to serve Christ, is advised to go down to his own house and show what great things the Lord has done for him.

And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be with him.

Jesus: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee."

And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men marvelled.—MARK v, 18-20.

THE central figure in the miracle of Gadara is a mere silhouette; but the important facts are so clearly stated that we have no difficulty in completing it. We know, to begin with, that this man had a home; though, under present circumstances, it was little or nothing to him. He had begun life in the usual way, leading his true love from the altar to a modest fireside. How bright the outlook, then! How proud and happy the young parents in the midst of their increasing household.

"His wee bit ingle, blinking bonnily,
His clean hearthstane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil."

But why should a man with a home be dwelling here among the tombs? How came he to this desolate place? It is the old story. *Facilis descensus Averni!* He had sinned away his birthright. His downward course began, no doubt, with the intoxicating cup. One vice followed another until the force of habit controlled him. Bad company, nights away from home, sensuality; thus he went from bad to worse until the happy home was desolate, his wife's heart broken, his children afraid of him. At length reason was unseated. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." His heart being open, a troop of evil spirits came in and took possession. The law was invoked in vain; he broke his chains and fled. And here he is among the tombs, a raving maniac, muttering to himself and making night hideous with his cries. He has lost everything; home, social standing, self-respect. His is, indeed, a desperate case.

One day the Lord came over the lake in a little boat with his disciples. On the way he quieted the stormy sea. As they were landing, the demoniac came running toward them, his hair flying, his clothes in tatters, his face distorted, foam issuing from his lips. Oh, monstrous power of sin!

And Jesus said, "Thou unclean spirit, come out of him." At that word of command the furies fled and the man lay sobbing before his feet.

It was a mighty miracle, mightier than the stilling of the tempest. No other marvel is comparable with the transformation of character. "'Twas great to call a world from naught, 'tis greater to redeem." This man is a new creature in Christ Jesus; new will, new

heart, new conscience, new life. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. It is a moral revolution, wrought in a moment by the power of God.

How do we know that the demoniac was thus renewed? By the fact that we see him presently "clothed and in his right mind." This means that he has regained his self-respect. Yesterday he would have boasted of his personal liberty, his right to be clothed or unclothed as he pleased; now he is thinking not of himself only, but of his fellow-men.

He is "in his right mind." Previously he had been wrong-minded as to all most-important things; but now, like the prodigal, he has "come to himself" and sees Christ and religion and morality in their proper light.

And observe his frank confession of Christ. He attaches himself to this despised Nazarene and cares not who knows it. The desire to keep one's religion under cover is always a suspicious circumstance. Viola, in "Twelfth Night," says of her diffident sister, "She never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek." A shrinking girl under such conditions might act in this manner: but it is inconceivable that a man under conviction of sin, looking to Christ for salvation, should be unwilling to avow it.

Let it be noted, also, that he wanted to do something to show his gratitude. This is the first impulse of a truly regenerate life. A surrender to Christ is not the sum total of the Christian life, but only the beginning of it. In the hour when Paul heard the voice saying, "I am Jesus!" he straightway answered,

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And his subsequent life was all doing. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." There is no discharge in this war.

Still further, the man of Gadara is ambitious to do some great thing. "Let me be with thee," he cries. "Let me sit at thy feet as a disciple. Let me follow thee. Let me join in proclaiming thy glory as the Saviour of men." So far as personal experience went he was thoroughly qualified to be a preacher like James or Peter or John; but otherwise he had scant qualifications. Every man to his place. "The body is not one member, but many. Shall the foot say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body? Or the ear, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body? Are all apostles, all prophets, all teachers? There are diversities of gifts and of operation; but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

The supreme evidence of this man's conversion, however, was his acquiescence in the Master's will, "Go home to thy friends," said Jesus, "and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee."

I wish we might have seen his home-coming. It may be that an old mother had for years been praying for his return and hoping against hope. God bless the faithful mothers, who pray and never faint! There she sat, her withered hands folded in her lap, as he stood in the doorway. Who shall tell the gladness in her heart? Who shall paint the brightness in her dimmed eyes?

It would appear that a wife also awaited him. Time was when she passed with him under an arch of flow-

ers into the joys and cares of wedded life. He had promised to love, honor and protect her. But in the course of the years there came a cooling of love, neglect, absence far into the night, a returning with red eyes and angry words, and oh, the horrible breath of the wine-cup. Then, one night, he did not return at all. Where had he gone? Some of the neighbors had seen him wandering among the tombs, gashed and bleeding, muttering to himself. And there he abode, self-exiled. On stormy nights she lay awake and thought of him.—God be praised for conjugal love; the love of the faithful wife that weathers all gales; the patience that holds fast to early vows and the memory of former joys and the hope of a better time coming.—He sees her standing yonder by the door. "Wife, I've come back," he cries. "I've come back to begin again. I've seen Jesus of Nazareth and he has cast out the demons. I want to return to you and the children; to life and God."

And his children, how they had dreaded his approach! They knew his savage ways. They had been accustomed to run and hide when he drew near, waving his arms and uttering blasphemies. Now they stood at a distance, awe-struck and wondering; they had never seen it on this fashion. "Come here," he says, "little daughter, I will not hurt you"; and the eldest reluctantly approaches. He parts her hair from her forehead and with sad, loving words makes his confession, "I've been a bad father, dear; but I've met Jesus of Nazareth and the demons are gone." His other children sidle near, wondering. At what? At the same mystery of regeneration which puzzles the older people. And they allow themselves to be taken

upon his knees. He kisses them one by one, and the past is gone!

Yonder on the wall is a chain hanging. "Let us take it down, good wife. Please God, you shall never call in the neighbors to bind me again." And as he looks this way there is something glistening on his cheek,—a strong man's tear. Aye; and there is a rainbow of promise in it. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." So the new life begins. There are scars on the man's face; his cheeks are still white and thin, and he will long carry about with him the marks of that awful nightmare in the tombs. But here with wife and children about him, ah, this is heaven on earth!

Is that all? Oh, no. On the evening of that day he gathers his wife and children about him and tells them the story, how it all happened; how he saw the little boat upon the lake and ran down with curses to meet it; how the strong Man looked who, standing in the bow of the boat, boldly faced him; how, with a ring of conscious power in his voice, He uttered those words, "Come out of him!" And then the awful struggle for a moment, when life and death tugged for the mastery within him; and how life won. "The Lord bade me," he continues, "return to the old home, live down the past and do good as I may have opportunity, by a holy and helpful life. But I can't do that without prayer. I am helpless and hopeless except as I have strength from above. Let us kneel down, therefore, and pray." Hear him now: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according unto thy lovingkindness and according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies

blot out my transgressions! Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow! Open thou my lips that my mouth shall show forth thy praise!" A long pause, and then: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who redeemeth thy life from destruction. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength; that do his commandments, hearkening to his voice! Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion! Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

And thus the changed man has changed his poverty-stricken home into the very gate of heaven. There may have been no tapestries or pictures there; little meal in the barrel, or oil in the cruse; but there was love, and there was the family altar. It was like the house of Obed-edom with the Ark of the Covenant in the midst of it.

Was that all? No. The next morning his neighbors dropped in, old friends who had known him in earlier and better days; some perhaps who had joined in his revels and tarried with him long at the wine. And they marvelled at what they saw. His earnest face, his evident sincerity, his interest in their welfare, these won for him a hearing. There was no gainsaying his word. He told his simple story, keeping Jesus always at the centre of it. He was never weary of sounding the praises of his Friend. "He published

throughout the whole city what Jesus had done for him."

Here the curtain falls. We know, however, that when the townspeople of Gadara besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts, this man remained, as his deputy, to represent his gracious purposes toward them. He preached the gospel in his humble way, until, in the passing of the years, he fell asleep. Then the great home-coming! Perhaps some of those who had been converted through his ministrations were awaiting him at heaven's gate. As he entered he lifted up his eyes and behold, his Saviour sat yonder enthroned in glory. "O Jesus," he cried, "let all heaven hear! I am the demoniac of Gadara! I am he that dwelt among the tombs! Thou didst restore me to hope and manhood and life. Thou art worthy to receive honor and glory and power and dominion forever and ever."

Is there a lesson here for us? Go home to thy friends, if thou art a Christian, and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee.

Home is the smallest, hardest, most trying, largest of parishes. It is the smallest, because it is apparently hemmed in by four walls. It is the hardest, since, as every one knows, it is easier to preach the Gospel to a great congregation than to speak tenderly and tactfully to one's kinsmen. It is the most trying, because it turns the searchlight of closest scrutiny on one's walk and conversation. And it is the largest, because out of this circle are the issues of life.

Who shall estimate the influence of godly fathers? One of the clearest days in my memory is that when my aged father, renewing the Covenant of his youth,

took down the old ha' Bible and lifted his voice in prayer. Blessed are the men who leave such memories to their children.

And what shall be said of the dear mothers in Israel? A stone in a village cemetery bears the touching legend, "Our Mother. She made home happy for us." Of all the rights and privileges of womanhood there is none comparable with this, to live so lovingly and consistently as to be able to come up at last to heaven, saying, "Lord, here am I and the children whom thou hast given me!"

Let us pay tribute also to the influence of sons and daughters. I mean old-fashioned sons and daughters who are not ashamed of such homely graces as filial love and reverence. No advocate of the temperance reform is better loved than Francis Murphy. It is not generally known, however, that forty years ago he was a drunkard and a criminal in one of the villages of Maine. Preachers had preached at him in vain. The law merely maddened him. One day his little daughter came to his cell and said with broken voice, "Papa, we're homesick without you." That was the turning point in his life; and we are not surprised to hear him saying, "Man is lost beyond the possibility of redemption if the divinity in his nature does not listen when his children whisper 'Home' in his ear."

And great is the power of brotherly affection and loyalty. It is my good fortune to preach to a congregation made up largely of young men. I know some among them who are bread-winners for the whole household. It may be that at times they feel impatient of being thus handicapped by caring for the dependent ones. Let them rather thank God and take courage.

Great is their privilege and they shall by no means lose their reward. Poets sing of knights of the olden time whose "swords are rust, whose steeds are dust, whose souls are with their God we trust"; but truer a thousand fold is the chivalry of these self-denying youth than that which spent itself in the tourney or on the battlefield.

A word for the sisters, also: ministering angels in many a home, not dreaming how their kindly, loving service is to be remembered in the future days. The world is full of Miriams who hold themselves ready to watch the cradle or strike the cymbals of encouragement as occasion may demand. "I lament," wrote Washington Irving, "that Providence denied me the companionship of sisters. Had it been otherwise, I should have been a better man."

So let us heed the Master's word, "Go home to thy friends and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee." Use your Christian influence to such effect that all in your family circle shall be brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. This is the great parish. You may preach there with seasonable words, which are like apples of gold shining through the meshes of a silver basket, or better than all, by force of example. The eyes of the home circle are constantly upon you. If there is any place where the Christian is "off duty," it is certainly not at home. Someone has said that religion is "not a coat, but a cuticle." It is more than either. It is not a coat to be put on and taken off at pleasure; no more is it a cuticle, that is, a superficial thing. It is a life that pervades the whole being, going into and through the bone and sinew and blood. This being so, a Christian

is bound to make his religion known and felt everywhere, always, under all circumstances, and most of all in his fellowship with those who are nearest and dearest to him.

Flashes the lovelight, increasing the glory,
Beaming from bright eyes with warmth of the soul,
Telling of trust and content the sweet story,
Lifting the shadows that over us roll;
King, king, crown me the king;
Home is the Kingdom and Love is the King!

XII

COVETOUSNESS

In which Jesus declines to commit himself in the matter of a contested will.

One of the Multitude: "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me."

Jesus: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" And he said unto them, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
—Luke xii, 13-21.

The world is full of little people. We are all little people in a way, spending our energy in quest of infinitesimals and prone to take inadequate views of things. What a birthright is ours, and what possibilities are before us! Yet how many are royal triflers, like Louis XV., who spent his time tinkering the clocks of the Louvre to the neglect of his affairs of state. While we live thus our world grows smaller and smaller and we with it. We go round in our narrow circle like an eagle born to cleave the heavens, but tethered to a stake.

But once there lived a great Man. He was the only great Man the world ever saw. He knew himself, his birth, capacities, high destiny. He knew God, knew him so well and intimately that he could say "I and my Father are One." He knew his life-work and concentrated all his energies upon it. His

thoughts and prayers, his sermons and miracles, all were subsidiary to the matter in hand. As for wealth, sordid pleasure and golden crowns, he appraised them at their exact value and waived them aside. *Inspexit et despexit!* He could not be diverted from his task. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how is my soul straitened until I shall accomplish it!" So he pursued his purpose, until, dying on the cross, he cried, "It is finished!" and went his way.

And the little people were always annoying this Man. Absorbed in their own insignificant pursuits, they sought persistently to draw him down to their level. He was like Gulliver bound in Lilliput with slender cords. His disciples wished him to determine for them the stupendous question of precedence at table! The Pharisees sought to entangle him in their disputations as to fasts and hand-washings and tithing of garden herbs. The Sadducees bore down upon him with the portentous problem of the seven-fold widow. The politicians demanded of him whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not. Quibblers, wire-drawers, hair-splitters, little people all! Here was a man who was ever preaching, "Up with your hearts!" while they were calling, "Come down! Come down to us!"

It chanced that once when Jesus was setting forth the great truths of the eternal life, a man of this paltry sort piped up with his grievance: "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." It was the oft-repeated story of a contested will. A father had two sons; the one thrifty and industrious, the other an indolent ne'er-do-weel. To Jacob he bequeathed his broad acres, vested interests, bonds and

mortgages, everything; while poor Esau was cut off with a shilling. Was it strange that the sense of wrong rankled in his breast? He thought upon this until the inheritance shut out all larger and more important considerations. He brooded on his wrongs by day and dreamed of them at night. The inheritance! The inheritance! His soul clamored for his just portion of it. Truth, virtue, immortality were crowded out of mind. His unadjusted claim was like a coin held close before the eyes and hiding the glory of the sun. He heard the weighty words of Jesus, but they were naught to him. What cared he for life and immortality? "Lord, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me!"

The answer of Jesus was brief and to the point. The case was one which lay within the purview of the Probate Court. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

But the occasion was improved by the Master for the pressing home of an important caveat. Turning from the inheritance-seeker to the people, he said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness!"

Let it not be supposed that Jesus was denouncing wealth. He knew, as all wise people know, that money is intrinsically neither good nor bad. A penny is morally as neutral as a horn button; whether it be "tainted" or not depends on the way it is gotten and used. There are times when a bushel of gold is not comparable in value with an ear of corn. But "the love of money is the root of all evil." *Auri sacra fames.* Oh, the frightful hunger of it!

The word covetousness is from an intensive verb meaning "to desire with an inordinate desire." It is

personified by Solomon on this wise: "The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, 'Give, give!' In our time the horse-leech has three daughters, to wit, "Nothing," "Enough" and "Opulence." "Nothing" wants something; "Enough" wants more; "Opulence" wants the earth. "Nothing" sits at the corner of the street with outstretched hands, crying "Misericordia! A penny for the love of God!"—"Enough" is a handicraftsman, an eight-hour man, who, blind to the splendor of skill and fidelity, demands a maximum of wages for a minimum of work. —"Opulence," the millionaire, stretches out his hands for a million more. Time was when a hundred-thousand would have satisfied him; now if he would shine in the Milky Way of stellar aristocracy he must own a yacht, an automobile, an equine establishment, a mansion in the city, a group of summer-homes by the shore and in the mountains, and, mayhap, a baronial castle beyond the seas. But all alike cry, "Give! Give!" And alike they are blind to the fact that presently they must surrender all.

A few days ago a child was run over by a Broadway car and mortally hurt. To quiet her wailing a benevolent gentleman put a silver quarter in her hand, saying, "Hold it fast, and be brave!" She died on the way to the hospital, with her little fingers clenched upon the coin. She had gone on without it! Ah, they all do.

The Lord followed up his caveat with a general proposition, namely, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." You say this is a truism; nay, not unless immortality be assumed as its postulate. Nothing is more com-

monly or practically denied than the proposition before us.

But what is the "life" which Jesus here speaks of? In general terms it is the breath which was breathed into the nostrils of man when God made him a living soul. Life is a line beginning at birth and reaching on forever. It is divided into two parts; the life here and the life beyond. The life here is brief as an eagle's flight; it is likened to foam on the waters, a dream, the flying of a weaver's shuttle, a tale that is told. To-day, to-morrow and the day after; and, behold, it is gone! "Out, out, brief candle; life's but a walking shadow."

Let us take heed, however, that we do not belittle the importance of the life here and now; for, notwithstanding its brevity, the issues of eternity are wrapped up in it.

As for the life beyond; it is forever and ever. Eternity, how long art thou! We are to live through the interminable æons. And by this token it is of supreme importance that we should know the right ratio, that we should form a just estimate of the relative length of the two portions of the endless line. The life here is to the life hereafter as a mote in a sunbeam to the great circle which the sun pursues in infinite space; as a grain of sand to all the sands upon the sea shores of the earth; as the swinging of a pendulum to the sum total of chronology; as the phosphorescent gleam of a firefly to the effulgence that fills the inter-stellar spaces; as a drop of water to the immeasurable volume of the deeps. Nay, these are all infinitely inadequate, but it is only by such comparisons that we can form the slightest conception of

the disparity of terms or grasp in any measure the significance of the Lord's insoluble problem, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life?"

And then, from these premises, our Lord frames this deduction: The man who lives for time and ignores eternity is a fool. He presents it in the form of a parable, thus: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he said to himself, 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my harvests?' And he said, 'This will I do; I will tear down my storehouses and build greater; and there will I bestow my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' (At this point, however, his soliloquy was broken in upon by a Voice which he had not reckoned on.) But God said to him, 'Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

At dead of night there was a cry of pain in the home of the rich man. His wife awoke, kindled the lamp and, seeing an ominous pallor on her husband's face, bade one of the household run for the doctor. He came, felt of the patient's pulse and shook his head.

"If anything remains to be done," he said, "you have no time to lose." The lawyer was straightway called to make the will. "I give and bequeath thus and so to my beloved wife; thus and so to my children; thus and so to schools and hospitals." But

how much will he reserve for himself? Nothing. How much will he take with him? Not a farthing. There will be no pocket in his shroud. The King of Terrors comes like a highwayman, crying, "Hands up!" This man was going on a long journey and had made no preparation. Fool, indeed! He had squandered his great opportunity. Life was before him, a journey in the dark, and he stumbled forth into it. So is he that hath laid up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

On that same night there was, perhaps, another death in the same city. The summons came to one, rich or poor it mattered not, enough that he was a prudent man. For he had pondered time and eternity and weighed things well. The pallor was on his face; but there was no tremor in his heart. He had devoted his years to the calm consideration of right and beneficence; and there was a crown laid up for him. So is he that is rich toward God.

Thus ends the lesson of the Master. It is possible, then, to be "rich toward God." But what is that? In a little while we shall be making our inventory at the border line. What shall we leave? We shall leave, perforce, all sordid things behind us. We shall leave our influence, moreover, for better or for worse, as a bequest to those who survive us. "I am called away," said Sheridan, "to meet an imperative engagement; but I will leave my influence with you." It is said that if one of the distant stars were extinguished, its light would linger for a thousand years. So is it with the memory of a holy man.

But what are our eternal assets; the things that fire cannot consume, that death cannot take from us? In

other words, what is a man "worth" as he passes into eternity?

The first item in the inventory is a clean character. This means freedom from sin; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And freedom from sin comes only by the cleansing of the blood; as it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

The second item is a philanthropic record. Have you been serving your fellow-men? Have you visited the sick, ministered to the poor, lightened the burdens of the weary? If so, this shall be reckoned to your credit. "For whosoever shall give a cup of cold water," said Jesus, "to the least of these my little ones in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward."

And the third item is service rendered to God. The man who leaves God out of the reckoning dooms himself to eternal beggary. "The longer I live," said Carlyle, "and the nearer I approach eternity, the more do I realize the tremendous truth of the statement 'The chief end of man is to glorify God.'"

The substance of the Master's teaching, therefore, is, "Be rich; get riches that endure." Have an independent fortune "proof against the tooth of time and rasure of oblivion." Lay up for yourself millions of treasure, the more the better, in bags that wax not old.

Lay up for yourself treasure in the heavens that faileth not! Be covetous Godward, and right-minded earthward. Estimate things at their right relative value. Prepare for the endless life. So live that you

shall not leave all. To that end count your assets now. Count in nothing that cannot be carried through the little wicket gate. Count in everything that can be taken with you: truth, character, usefulness, humanity and true piety. Be rich, be rich toward God!

XIII

PRACTICAL RELIGION

In which he shows how a business man can do business to the glory of God.

And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

Jesus: "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

The People: "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner."

Zacchæus, at his home: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold."

Jesus: "To-day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."—LUKE xix, 1-10.

WE require two things of Religion. One is that it shall be up-to-date; the other, that it shall be practical.

The Gospel of Christ meets both of these requirements. Its three essential factors are abreast of the age. One of these is God; "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Another is man; who likewise changes not; he has always been

conscious of his divine birth and of the loss of his birthright and of the vital importance of finding his way back to the favor of God. The remaining factor is Christ, the God-man, standing between God and man, placing the hand of the sinner in that of his justly offended Father and bringing them into at-one-ment. And Christ is also the unchangeable One. We sing, "Ring in the Christ that is to be"; but there is no Christ coming who has not been from the foundation of the world. The true religion was adjusted, at the outset, to all the possible vicissitudes of time. It is always abreast of the age.

As to the other requirement, namely, that religion shall be practical; the gospel is precisely responsive to it. There are two supreme longings in the soul of man: On the one hand, he wants to escape from the justly incurred penalty of sin; and there the Gospel meets him with the gracious announcement that the handwriting of ordinances which was against him has been nailed to Christ's cross and taken out of the way. On the other hand, he wants to know how to live righteously every day; and to this, also, the Gospel makes definite answer, in detail and particular. It touches the entire circumference of his life at every point. It shows him how to deport himself at home and in society, in politics, in business and in all possible relations with his fellow-men.

It is true that the Gospel is not always preached in this way. The man in the pulpit is tempted to turn aside to dreams and speculations; to lose himself and his audience in the bewildering mazes of "free will, fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute"; or to preach smooth things in fine rhetoric, "faultily faultless,

icily regular, splendidly null." But this is not the fault of the Gospel. The Christianity of Christ was intensely practical. It bore upon the necessities of the soul as constantly and equably as the atmosphere does on every square inch of the body. It was fitted not only to all circumstances in human life but to all sorts and conditions of men. The standpoint of the great Preacher was always the same, whether he spoke to the Rabbis of the Sanhedrin or to fishermen beside the lake, to invalids in the porches of Bethesda or to little children who flocked about him, to Martha the housewife cumbered with much-serving, or to men engaged, like Zaccheus, in the affairs of business life.

It is probable that no class of persons take a less interest in the great problems of religion than business men. This is partly due to the absorbing character of their pursuits; but the impression that religion is a fabric of dreams and speculations and sentimental transcendentalism has also much to do with it. It may be that a consideration of the interview of Jesus with Zaccheus will convince us that the opposite is true.

Observe, Zaccheus was a Business Man.

He held a government appointment as head of the customs department at Jericho. It was one of the two most important tolbooths in the Jewish portion of the Empire; the other being at Capernaum, where Matthew, probably a friend of Zaccheus, held the corresponding office. But, unfortunately for Zaccheus, the Jews as a subjugated people looked with the utmost disfavor on any of their countrymen who ac-

cepted an appointment under the Roman government; so that his vocation was under the ban. There was nothing intrinsically dishonorable in it, however; and Christ, who throughout his ministry had much to say about the publicans, in no wise discredited it. He taught, on the contrary, that any trade or profession is lawful provided it be carried on in a lawful way. In his eyes an honest trade was quite as honorable as any of the learned professions. The question is whether a man is making the most of his opportunity. No doubt there are some who "miss their calling." There are cobblers in Congress as there are statesmen cobbling shoes; but no one really misses his calling who does his best where circumstances have placed him. Any business is right and proper which adds to the exchequer of self and society without violating any of the divine laws.

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

Observe, again, that Zaccheus was a Successful Man.

It would appear that the wealth which he had amassed was due not only to the salary but much more to the perquisites of his office. The thing that we call "graft" in public service is not peculiar to our time or country. In the Orient the three degrees of comparison in the public service are, "Get on, get honor, get honest." The collector of taxes at the Jericho tolbooth was simply in fashion in placing honesty last of all. But for that fact his riches would have been in no wise against him.

In Sir Thomas More's picture of Utopia he makes

wealth contemptible; but this is not so in common life nor to the minds of right-thinking men. There are three things which gold will do: First, it qualifies a man to make the most of himself in securing the conveniences as well as the necessities of life. Second, it gives him an opportunity of alleviating the distresses of his less fortunate friends and neighbors; as witness the schools, hospitals and other benevolent institutions which have been made possible through the benevolence of rich men. And, third, it enables its possessor to man and equip the great enterprises of the kingdom of God; it builds churches, prints Bibles and sends missionaries to preach the gospel in the regions beyond. There is reason therefore for saying that gold will do almost everything. Almost!

The one thing, however, which it cannot do is supremely important; it cannot purchase the inheritance of life. A man knocks at heaven's gate, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto me." The voice of the warder from within answers, "Who art thou?" "I am Rothschild." "Who?" "Rothschild; the Baron Rothschild." "And who is the Baron Rothschild, pray?" "The Banker of Frankfort, who negotiated the government loan of Denmark and has replenished the exchequer of the nations in critical times." "Have you nothing more to say for yourself?" "Is not that enough?" "Nay, if that be all, I never knew you!"

Observe, furthermore, that Zaccheus had "a soul above buttons."

He thought of other things than business. There are men who live in their shops and offices like the

fabled prisoner in his contracting cell, the walls closing in upon them, more and more, until they are crushed to death. But this tax collector was larger than his tolbooth. He had an interest in things going on about him. He heard that Jesus was coming to the city and resolved to see him. In order to secure a coign of vantage, as he was small of stature, he climbed up into the boughs of a sycamore tree. No doubt the people smiled, possibly derided him; but dignity to the winds! He must see Jesus. What was his motive? Mere curiosity? So far, so good. No less an authority than Lord Bacon has said, "If you never ask questions, you will never find out." But, perhaps, his motive lay deeper. He may have felt a real interest in Christ. It is not at all improbable that a letter had come from his friend Matthew, the tax collector at Capernaum, on this wise:

FRIEND BELOVED:

A marvellous thing has happened to me since I last wrote you. Jesus of Nazareth has entered into my life and transformed it. He is a great Preacher, a doer of wonderful works; I believe him to be the long-looked-for Messiah, the very Son of God. He has saved me from my sins. I have consecrated my life to him. A few days ago he left Capernaum and is now journeying along the caravan route through Cæsarea-Philippi, to Jerusalem. On the way he must pass through Jericho. I beseech you by no means fail to see and hear him. My hope is that he may do for you what he has so graciously done for me.

So the ground of his eagerness to see Jesus may have been a deep concern for the salvation of his soul. For, indeed, at the centre of the heart of every living man is this longing to be relieved of sin and of the

"certain looking-for of judgment" which follows it. And it behooves every earnest man to exhaust the last atom of his energy in solving this problem; nor must he rest until, like Zaccheus, he has put to the vital test the rumor that Jesus "has power on earth to forgive sin."

Observe, still further, that the soul of Zaccheus was open to conviction.

This is shown by his readiness to meet Christ half-way. "As they came to the place, Jesus looked up and saw him, and said, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." It was not strange that, as they walked along the street, the people murmured that Jesus had consented to be the guest of a publican. Jericho was a city of priests, any one of whom would doubtless have felt honored to entertain him, but he had chosen to press himself upon the hospitality of a sinful man.

We are told briefly of what happened as they sat at dinner in the house of Zaccheus. The table-talk of Jesus was always interesting and profitable. He dwelt upon the fact that he had come "to seek and to save the lost"; and in doing so he doubtless urged his host to believe in himself as the Redeemer of men. Then followed the impressive Parable of the Pounds, in which he set forth the right use of energy and possession, as a solemn trust from God.

And, observe, finally, that Zaccheus was an Opportunist, in the best possible sense.

He then and there became a Christian. How do

we know this? By the testimony of Christ, who said, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." No man is a true son of Abraham who does not believe in Christ; for Jesus himself said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." To be a Christian is to belong to the true Israel of God. But the Christianity of Zaccheus does not rest solely on the testimony of Christ. It is said, "By their fruits ye shall know them"; and the test was rigidly and successfully applied in this case. It is written, "And Zaccheus stood, and said." Those are noble words. They mean that he had the courage of his convictions. He did not reserve his confession until a more convenient time, but at once came out into the open. In the presence of his guests he made his confession of faith. It is brief, but contains three important items:

To begin with, he says, "The half of my goods I give to the poor." He had lived thus far for himself; he now proposes to do for others. The first step toward Christ is out of self; and Zaccheus takes it.

Then he says, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Here is no proposition to compromise with his creditors at twenty-five per cent., but a magnificent requital. Doubtless those of his friends and acquaintances who were present said, "This appears to be the genuine sort of religion. If Zaccheus means that, he is a changed man."

And the third thing which he says is by implication, but none the less positive on that account: He intimates that having enriched himself by fraud he will defraud no more. He proposes to live henceforth as

becomes a true follower of Christ. He will make his light shine among men.

We hear no more of Zaccheus, but are left to suppose that he went back to the tolbooth and continued to collect the taxes there. If so, we may be assured of this: he was sensible of the presence of Christ in the affairs of his business life. He knew as he collected the taxes from those who crossed the border that his Lord was beside him, saying, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

The practical application is brief and manifest; go thou and do likewise. Christ asks to be received as a welcome guest. He comes to us as really as he came to Zaccheus in Jericho that day, saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open unto me, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." Shall we admit him? This is practical religion. Shall we let him into our hearts and into our homes, into our shops and offices? If so, be assured his presence and benediction will enrich and gladden all.

XIV

THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY

In which he instructs his disciples how to minister to the bodies as well as to the souls of men.

The Disciples to Jesus: "The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food."

Jesus: "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat."

The Disciples: "We have here but five loaves, and two fishes."

Jesus: "Bring them hither to me."

And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.

—MATT. xiv, 15-20.

WE are living in a time of almost unexampled prosperity. Were there ever such harvests? Trade, commerce and manufactures are at flood tide. But there is never a lack of poverty. Good times or bad times, the poor we have always with us.

Behold the threadbare army as it files past. God's poor and the devil's poor, the deserving and the ne'er-do-weels. In the van come the tramps; sturdy beggars who refuse to work because "the world owes them a living." That is the sum total of their philosophy. In fact, however, the world owes no man a living; so far as there is any debt, it is all the other way. My brain and sturdy limbs owe me a living;

God help me to exact it! What have we for these tramps? Nothing; not a farthing. The rule of the Scriptures is the right one, "If a man will not work, neither let him eat."

Still they come. Here are the professionals. Poverty is their business; rags and tatters are their stock in trade. They fatten on the sentiment of thoughtless givers. Not long ago an old man died in the Borough of The Bronx who had spent his entire life as a street beggar, and money was found in his mattress, under the floor, behind the plaster of the walls, in every nook and cranny of his abject home. He had grown rich on the gullibility of the public. What have we for such professionals? Nothing. To feed them is to encourage them in their evil ways.

And still they come. Thousands on thousands with red eyes and sodden flesh go reeling, hiccoughing, staggering past. These are victims of drink. They may be starving, but they drink right on. In the year of the Irish famine, when we were sending shiploads of wheat and potatoes to save the people of the Emerald Isle from starvation, they consumed four million bushels of grain in malt liquors! Aye, gaunt and famishing though such men be, they would rather drink than eat. What shall we give them? Nothing. It surely is no kindness to place money in their hands. This is but to help them on toward that darkness from which returns a voice, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God!"

And still they come. Here are the deserving poor; creatures of circumstance, beaten down by "disaster, following fast and following faster." Among them are many wives and mothers, blue-lipped and hollow-

cheeked, with little children, wan and sorrowful, clinging to their skirts. They are as innocent of blame as the sparrows chirping in our streets. Victims of heredity, victims of misfortune, victims of disease; doing their best—and doing it vainly—to keep the wolf from the door. They are wards of society and must be provided for. The injunction of the Master is, "Give ye them to eat."

I. Let it be observed that *this ministry of Charity is a part of the business of the Christian Church.*

There are sentimentalists who affirm that the sum total of Christianity is charity. That, however, is not so. Its purpose is summed up in a single word, Salvation. But let there be no mistake; by salvation is meant not merely deliverance from spiritual death, but the uplifting of the whole man. Is the soul immortal? So is the body; since it furnishes the germ of the spiritual tabernacle in which we are destined to dwell through the eternal ages. The mission of Christ was to save body and soul, the whole man. We are bound to say, therefore, that kindness is an essential factor of practical Christianity; a kindness that covers the entire circumference of human life. The best definition that has ever been given of religion is that of the Apostle James, to wit, "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." More briefly, it is to be good and to do good as we have opportunity unto all men. More briefly still, it is character *plus* beneficence; a beneficence which has to do as well with the brief handbreadth of our present life as with that which lies further on.

II. *The church has been attending to this business more or less faithfully ever since the beginning of the Christian Era.*

To hear the criticisms of a certain class of censorious people, one would suppose that the church had been doing nothing but praying and singing hymns, dreaming of heaven and sending flannel garments to Borria Boola Gha. A brief excursus into history will correct that impression.

At the time of the advent of Christ the world, so far as known, consisted of a narrow fringe of nations around the Mediterranean Sea, all of which had been subjected to the domination of Rome. The world outside was still in the darkness of barbarism. As to the condition of those who were embraced in the Roman Empire it is summed up in a sentence of Uhlhorn's: "It was a world without love."

In the Empire there were three classes of people: *First,* the Patricians. Of these there were about ten thousand in the Imperial City and they constituted the ruling order. They lived in luxury, dwelt in palaces, arrayed themselves in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. *Second,* the Plebeians. There were three hundred and twenty thousand of these in Rome. They were too proud to work, holding that to be the business of slaves. How did they live? On the bounty of the Patricians. At the beginning of every month they received tickets called *tessaræ,* which entitled them to draw five bushels of wheat per capita, besides giving them admission to the public games. *Third,* Slaves; who constituted the bulk of the population. For the most part they were captives of war. Of these there were above a million in the

city. All labor was performed by them; they built the walls, roads, palaces, aqueducts and other public works. They lived in *ergastula,* which were abject tenements divided into stalls. They were treated with less consideration than beasts of burden.

Into that "world without love" came Jesus. His purpose was to reform it. His enemies said, "He turneth the world upside down." This indeed he meant to do, since only so could it be turned right side up. At the outset of his ministry, in his sermon at Nazareth, he announced his mission on this wise: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He went everywhere ministering to all sorts and conditions of men. He gathered about him a company of fishermen and other humble folk, who were destined to be the nucleus of the church, and sent them out to preach and minister in the same way. He came at length to Calvary, where he was crucified, on a hilltop, by the wayside, with his hands stretched out.

It is thus evident that his purpose was to uplift the masses, to bring about such a betterment of temporal and spiritual conditions as would ultimately establish his kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth. This was not to be accomplished in a day, or a year, or a century; but forces were set in operation which were destined finally to right all wrongs, equalize all classes and bring in the Golden Age.

As we look back over the centuries which have

passed, we may easily see what the Gospel has been doing to this end. The leaven has been gradually but surely leavening the lump. Let us inquire more specifically what Jesus has been doing through his church during these eighteen hundred years.

(1) He has taught and emphasized *the equality of man.*

This was practically a new doctrine when he announced it. He was himself a man of the people. One of his distinctive titles was The Son of Man. His ministry was among the multitudes. In the organization of his church "not many mighty, not many noble were called." The genius of his ministry was formulated by the Apostle Paul in a manifesto which was destined to be the source of all the historic symbols of civil and ecclesiastical freedom; namely, "God hath created of one blood all nations of men." And whatever may be said against the Church—which is by no means perfect—this must be conceded, that it is the one place where the rich and poor meet together, acknowledging that the Lord is the Maker of them all. In the philosophy of Jesus there is no caste. Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are all one in him; because there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

(2) He has taught and enforced *the dignity of labor.*

A divine wisdom is manifest in the fact that Jesus, coming from heaven under a commission to exalt the multitude, took part with them in the fellowship of toil. He was himself a carpenter. He knew what it was to grow weary in a workshop; and all honest workmen are dignified by this association with him.

Indolence is dishonorable. The plebeians of Rome would not work because they were free men. Christ was a free man, but he was no plebeian. The foundation of the Third Estate was laid in the shop of Nazareth where he made plows for the neighboring farmers and mended the furniture of the village people. He taught by both precept and example that an honest man must be a producer, contributing by sweat of brain and brawn to the public good.

(3) He introduced *the wage system.*

This is not to say that wages were not previously paid for labor in individual or sporadic cases; but there was no such thing as a wage system until he formulated it. This he did when he laid down the proposition, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." Up to that time work was under compulsion of the lash, and whatever the toiler received was not in the nature of desert, but gratuity. The custom of giving "tips" for service in our time is a return to pre-Christian barbarism. The self-respect of an honest laborer should lead him to accept only that which he earns. He takes his pay because he is entitled to it.

(4) The Gospel has brought about, by its operation through the centuries, *a more equable distribution of wealth.*

It is sometimes said by thoughtless people "The rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer." This is distinctly not true. The rich are growing richer, but the poor are growing richer too. This will appear from a momentary survey of facts. The Borough of Manhattan has a population of about two millions, which is almost precisely that of the ancient city of Rome. In Rome the wealth was ex-

clusively in the hands of a favored few, certainly less than ten thousand patricians; the remainder—nineteen hundred and ninety thousand, in round numbers—consisted of penniless plebeians and slaves without a denarius to their name. These were the proletariat. Who will undertake to say that conditions are no better in the city of New York? Things are not ideal by any means, but by contrast they are as noon to midnight. We sometimes speak of "the submerged tenth"; in Rome it was the submerged one-hundred-and-ninety-nine two-hundredths! It is so far from being true that all money is in the hands of ten thousand of our population that one may venture to say that there are not ten thousand without it. He is a rare man, nowadays, who does not know the crisp rustle of paper money or the clink of coin. It is true we have many millionaires, not a few of whom, however, have come up from the ranks; it is equally true that the great majority of the people belong to the self-supporting class, who, so far from soliciting charity, ask no odds of any man.

(5) The Church of Christ has ameliorated the condition of the masses by providing *institutions for the relief of the poor and suffering.*

The world is no longer "a world without love." The genius of the gospel has come down through the centuries like Milton's angel of the morning; and along its pathway have sprung up asylums, hospitals, protectories, reformatories, beneficences of every sort. If those who are disposed to find fault with the Church in this particular will take the trouble to look over the Directory of the Associated Charities of New York, they will discover that the work done by purely

secular agencies is wholly inconsiderable when compared with that of the various religious organizations. It is no exaggeration to say, in the light of statistics, that there is more of practical charity in the little finger of the Church than in the loins of the godless world. No longer must Lazarus sit at the gate of Dives waiting for crumbs. No longer need the lame and withered and halt lie in the porches of Bethesda waiting for the moving of the waters. Thanks to the compassionate Christ, the poor and suffering of Christendom are cared for. Thus through his church our Lord has been bettering the condition of the masses. The cry of Socialism is, "Down with the rich! Down with the aristocracy!" Not so does Christ meet the problem. The philosophy of his gospel is one that proposes to regenerate society not by impoverishing the Avenues, but by improving the slums. It aims to reform not by leveling down, but by leveling up.

III. *But the business of the church is not finished yet.*

We have the remnant of the poor still with us; and the question is, What are we to do for those who are unable to provide for themselves? There is a right way and there is a wrong way of helping them. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." The word "consider" suggests the need of careful thought. The usual way of giving is by impulse; sentimentally, indiscriminately and often ostentatiously. It is to feed the hungry as if bodily hunger were all. It is to clothe the naked as if the soul needed no "fine linen clean and white." It is to care for the physical with little or no regard for the immortal man.

The better way is to give in the spirit of Christ. He fed the five thousand and, at the same time, declared unto them the unsearchable riches of his grace. He ministered to the whole man. He was not deaf to the appeal for bread, but was mindful that, after all, the matter of supreme importance was the welfare of the soul. We are not infrequently criticised for giving "a loaf wrapped up in a tract." It is said that we forget the importance of things here and now in our passion for "other-worldliness." It was in this spirit that the man of Cherioth found fault with the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, saying, "What a waste of ointment! It might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor." The religious factor is thus ruled out of beneficence. Everything for the body, nothing for the soul. Everything for time, nothing for eternity! The other way is the better, if it be true that the mendicant is a man made in God's likeness and destined to live forever. In a little while the body will return to dust; but the soul will live through endless æons. It is relatively of slight importance whether the body, when it is presently carried into the graveyard, is sleek and comely and wrapped in a satin winding-sheet, or, worn and shrunken, in a cotton shroud; since the real man will have passed beyond the reach of all mere problems of food and raiment. The question of highest importance then will be, Was he rich toward God? It is a poor makeshift for charity that puts a roof over a beggar's head and sends him out homeless into eternity. Such one-sided charity does not pay deference to the true dignity of man.

We are bound to follow Jesus in our endeavor to

solve this problem. It is sound logic to convert the soul while we relieve the necessities of the body, since in so doing we set a man upon his feet and enable him to care for himself. Sin is the bitter root of poverty. To bring a man to Christ is to take him out of the ranks of the beggars; inasmuch as there is no Christianity without self-respect, and self-respect involves the duty of earning an honest livelihood. So then to say, "Come to Jesus," as we give the crust, is to lend ourselves both to the regeneration of the individual and the reformation of society.

This is, moreover, to help the needy not for a brief moment, but forever. Such was the spirit of Christ; the Christ who cared for body and soul alike; who had compassion on the multitude crying for perishable bread but needing more the bread "of which if a man eat he shall never hunger"; who stood at the crossing of the ways, offering his precious wares to the passer-by: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price! Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live!"

XV

A FRIEND IN NEED

In which he finds a lonely man in a sorrowful predicament and lends a helping hand.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity.

Jesus to the Paralytic: "Wouldest thou be made whole?"

The Paralytic: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me."

Jesus: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk."

And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.—JOHN v, 2-9.

THE limit of castigation under the Roman law was "forty stripes save one." The man at Bethesda should therefore have been near the end of his tether, since he had suffered under a whip of scorpions for thirty-eight years; so long that the heart had almost gone out of him. He had company enough, such as it was; since the porches were full of "lame, halt and withered"; but there was not one among them who was not looking out for himself. At times, when the surface of the intermittent spring began to be agitated, the cry was raised, "The waters move!" and while all were struggling toward the pool, this help-

less cripple strove desperately, but in vain. He was jostled aside. Too late! His oft-repeated disappointments had dulled and hardened him. The voice of Jesus, walking through the porches, was calculated to stimulate his sensibilities. "Wouldest thou be made whole?" Would he! The answer was in a tone of utter helplessness, the lament of one abandoned to his fate: "Sir, I have no man, when the waters are moved, to help me in!"

It is the law of life: the survival of the fittest. In the scramble for fame and fortune the best must win. There are voices on every side, applause and laughter; but alas, many are alone in the crowd. There is no wilderness like a thronged city. It is the home of the solitary. In and out, threading their way among the multitude, go men and women bearing their burdens without a word of sympathy, without a hand stretched forth to relieve them. The waters ever moving, and not a friend to put them in.

Alone, alone! All, all alone!
Alone on a wide, wide sea;
So lonely 'twas that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

It is to the man alone in the crowd that Jesus comes, as he came to Bethesda, with his proffer of friendship. His heart is moved with infinite compassion; since he himself was ever a lonely man. He carried with him from his boyhood a great secret which separated him from all about him. He had the kindest heart that ever beat in a human breast, yet his nearest friends and neighbors hid as it were their

faces from him. He carried his burden alone. As he passed under the shadow of the olive trees in Gethsemane he left three companions to watch while he went on into the deeper darkness to drink the bitter cup of death; and presently, finding them asleep, he said with infinite tenderness of reproach, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He trod the wine-press alone and of the people there was none with him. On the cross he went down, deeper still, into the night of solitude until the awful cry was wrung from him, *Eloi, Eloi lama sabacthani!*

> So lonely 'twas that God himself
> Scarce seeméd there to be.

Yes, he can be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." He knows what it is to be alone in the crowd; and it means much when he offers to befriend us.

I. The hour when a man clasps hands with Jesus, in token of friendship, is the crucial hour of life; for this compact is nothing less than Conversion.

It is a revolution in the soul. It is a turning "right about face." The hand which a man clasps in that tremendous hour is a strong hand; the same that framed the world and spun it out upon its orbit in infinite space. It is a loving hand, warm with all the sympathy of divine grace. It is a pierced hand; no one can feel its touch for an instant without apprehending the fact that he was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed." To grasp that hand is to part company with the "certain fearful-looking-for

of judgment" and enter into an assurance that sin is blotted out.

II. But the friendship of Jesus means more than salvation from the penalty of sin; it means that he stands ready now to assist us in the formulation of our Creed.

No sooner is a man converted to Christ than he perforce begins to inquire "What shall I believe concerning the great verities that centre in him?" And thenceforth the word of the Master is his Court of Last Appeal. This is not the way of the world. The average man gets his creed by heredity or environment; he borrows it from those around him. Here is the way Shakespeare puts it:

Hamlet: Do you see that cloud that's in shape almost like a camel?
Polonius: By the mass, 'tis a camel indeed.
Hamlet: Methinks 'tis a weasel.
Polonius: 'Tis backed like a weasel.
Hamlet: Or like a whale.
Polonius: Very like a whale.

So a man is likely to get from the next man his opinions as to the problems of life. But he who has clasped hands with Jesus is bound to believe what he says.

The Christian is a "disciple" of Christ; that is, a pupil sitting at his feet. If he inquire, "What shall I believe about God?" the answer is, "When ye pray, say Our Father"; and, so far as the Christian is concerned, that ends it. If he ask, "What shall I believe about the Bible?" the answer is, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life

and these are they which testify of me"; and if he is a true Christian, though he dwell in a very cyclone of controversy as to the authority of Holy Writ, he takes his Master's word for it. So, also, as to the problems of immortality and heaven and hell. He has made a covenant of friendship with One whose wisdom and authority are final for him. "To whom shall we go, O Lord, but unto thee? Thou only hast the words of eternal life."

III. The friendship of Jesus means, also, that he marks out the Conduct of our Life.

We are bound not to be taken up in the lips of talkers, and not to go with the multitude to do evil. The way of the world, in questions of right and wrong, is to follow the fashion. A few days ago at Sunshine Mission the members of the Boys' Club, taking umbrage at some ruling of their teacher, raised the cry, "One out; all out!" and away they went. The masons and bricklayers are just now doing the same thing in a larger way. "Follow the leader." We go like sheep after the bell-wether:

> Crooked or straight, through quags and thorny dells
> True to the jingling of the leader's bells.

But the man who has accepted Christ is bound to consult him in all questions of conscience and to accept his decision as final and conclusive. He must stand like the three youths in Babylon, unmoved by the sound of cornet and flute and sackbut and psaltery, while, amid the adulations of the multitude, the great image goes by. The command is, "Bow low!" He answers, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that

I will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." He may be thrown into the fiery furnace for his devotion to his Master's will; but in that furnace he has the company of One like unto the Son of God, and out of it he emerges without the smell of fire upon him. If much is sacrificed by turning aside, in this manner, from the world's dictum to follow our Lord alone, there is great compensation in knowing that he will stand by us.

IV. To clasp hands with Jesus in a compact of friendship means, still further, that we enter upon his Service and take the place which he assigns us.

It is a mistake to suppose that being a Christian is merely receiving Christ as our Saviour from sin; it is living a new sort of life; it is yielding ourselves, body and soul, to the service of Christ's kingdom; it is to call him Lord and Master. We are thenceforth not our own, but his, "bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The love of Christ now constrains us. He has work for us to do. "Say not it is yet four months and then cometh the harvest; lift up your eyes and see! The fields are already white unto the harvest!" We can no longer stand idle in the market place as those who take no interest in the salvation of the world. He puts the sickle in our hands and says, "Go, reap for me!" Nay, better than that; he says, "Come, reap with me." I am a "laborer together with him." I do not toil alone; he toils with me. Oh, the infinite strength there is in realizing it.

One more day's work for Jesus;
One less of life for me!
But heaven is nearer,
And Christ is dearer,
Than yesterday to me;
His love and light
Fill all my soul to-night.

O blesséd work for Jesus!
O rest at Jesus' feet!
There toil seems pleasure.
My wants are treasure.
And pain for him is sweet,
Lord, if I may,
I'll serve another day.

V. It means, moreover, that Christ as our loyal Friend will share our Sorrows.

The deepest loneliness that ever comes to a mortal man is in the Vale of Baca. It was there that the Psalmist wrote, "I watch and am alone, like a sparrow on the housetop." He was not thinking of the gregarious, loquacious sparrow with which we are so familiar, that holds noisy parliament in our streets, and chirps his optimism to every passerby; but of the lone and solitary blue-breast of the Orient that is never seen in company but pipes a monotonous and melancholy note moving the hearer to tears, as if some recent sorrow were pressing a thorn to the singer's breast. Ah, how many a man is thus alone! But never the friend of Jesus: he cannot be alone in adversity. His yoke is always a yoke for two; and the strong Friend is beside him. The sympathy of that Friend is infinitely strong and helpful.

We can only say to one another at best, "I am sorry for you." And our words are oftentimes as vinegar

on nitre. But his is the sympathy of omnipotence and his words give "beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning!" He stands beside us at the open grave, as he did at Bethany, pointing us away from its darkness to the light of the open heavens, saying, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

VI. And the friendship of Jesus means that we shall not be left alone in the swellings of the Jordan.

We make the last voyage alone, our weeping kinsfolk standing on the shore and giving us farewell. Oh, if they could but go a little further with us! We go alone, did I say? Nay; "thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." I have stood by deathbeds again and again when Christians were passing out of human sight, and never once have I known one to die otherwise than peacefully or triumphantly. In the hour when other friends and kinsfolk are impotent, he girds himself to sustain us. "The best of all," said Wesley in his last hour, "is Immanuel, God with us!"

And after death, the judgment; where each for himself must answer before God. One man alone, at the Great Assize! Is there none to stand beside him?

Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on His hands.

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me:—
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Nor let that ransom'd sinner die.

And then? The Father's house! Forth from the great tribunal the friend of Jesus passes into the Communion of Saints and general assembly of the first-born. He shall be lonely no more forever. Oh, glorious fellowship! The Father's house! Lights, laughter and merry-making! No more selfishness, no misunderstandings, no alienations, no friendlessness forever and ever. Home, sweet home!

And this friendship of Jesus, so strong, helpful, eternal, is to be had for the taking. His hand is stretched out. He comes to every lonely man, as he came to the cripple at Bethesda, with a kindly proffer of help. Shall we seal the compact? We have canvassed the high privileges and grave responsibilities which are involved in it. Are we ready to clasp hands with him?

In the year 1808 the audience-hall of the Palace of Erfurt was crowded with a throng of kings and princes who had assembled to witness the sealing of an imperial alliance. Up over the throne was the legend, "The friendship of a great man is a gift from the gods." Alexander, the Czar of Russia, advanced to meet Napoleon, saying, "I experience the truth of that sentiment to-day." And Napoleon, who shared with him the honors of the world's arena at that time, answered, "I reciprocate your felicitations and clasp hands with you." The compact was greeted with a burst of applause. Alas, it was mere pantomime, a hollow mockery. A little later the armies of Alexander and Napoleon were marching against each other with fire in their eyes.

It is not thus that we begin our friendship with Christ. This clasping of hands is no empty show. If

we receive him at all, it must be as our friend for better or worse, through evil and good report. We take him to be our Prophet, Priest and King. We promise an unceasing loyalty, in return for his unspeakable gifts. We walk henceforth hand in hand with him through all the experiences of life and on into eternity. Friends once; friends forever.

XVI

"ROOM FOR THE LEPER!"

In which he discovers faith in an unexpected quarter and singularly honors it.

And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Jesus, touching him: "I will; be thou made clean."

And straightway his leprosy was cleansed.

Jesus: "See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."—MATT. viii, 1-4 (*cf.* MARK 1-45.)

THE Sermon on the Mount was Christ's Inaugural on entering upon the formal administration of his Kingdom. And it was delivered with a royal grace. The scene was probably at the Horns of Hattin, a double peak on the western shore of Gennesaret. A multitude had gathered there from the villages of Galilee and more distant parts; and all were "amazed at his wonderful words."

In the distance, far beyond the outskirts of the crowd, stood a man with a mantle over his face. "The finger of God" was upon him; for so the leprosy was characterized in those days. Time was when a fond mother had held him in her arms and dreamed dreams and seen visions of a bright future before him. But as the years passed, perhaps in early manhood, there

came an ominous spot in his flesh. He presented himself to the priest, according to the prescript of the law, and heard the sentence of doom. He issued from the temple an outcast, life stretching before him as a living death.

> "'Room for the leper! Room!' And as he came
> The cry passed on, 'Room for the leper,
> Room for the leper!' And aside they stood,
> Matron and child, and pitiless manhood, all
> Who met him on his way, and let him pass.
> And onward through the open gate he came,
> A leper with the ashes on his brow.
> * * * *
> So he went forth alone! Not one of all
> The many whom he loved, nor she whose name
> Was woven in the fibres of the heart
> Breaking within him now, to come and speak
> Comfort unto him."

He thenceforth made his abode among the hills; where he felt the deeper ravages of his disease from day to day. It preyed upon him slowly, surely, until he was "full of leprosy." And he dwelt alone! Alone! At night when he looked toward the city and saw lights kindling in happy homes, memories came crowding thick and fast upon him. And crying out against fate, he sought his covert among the rocks.

He stood afar that day with his mantle drawn and hand upon his lips. At the sound of any approaching footfall, he cried with muffled voice and a strange rattle in his throat, "Unclean! unclean!" He watched the crowd gathering upon the opposite hill. In an attitude of eagerness he bent to listen; from the distance came the voice of the Teacher: "*Blessed are the poor*

in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

Then he saw a commotion among the people. They were bringing their sick to be healed; the lame and halt and withered. He saw cripples at the touch of Jesus throw away their crutches and the blind lift up their faces to the blue sky! He could hear them in the distance praising God!

And with this came the suggestion of a wondrous possibility: perhaps this great Physician might be able to heal him! It was a forlorn hope, but it would not pass. It was like a day star of promise rising in the midnight of his soul.

The assembly was breaking up. The Teacher was going down the mountain path. Now was the leper's opportunity. Now or never! With the hope of healing struggling in his breast, he began to run. Necessity knows no law. He forgot to draw his mantle over his face; forgot to keep his finger on his lip; forgot to cry, "Unclean!" forgot the statute of limitation that should have restrained him; forgot all but his tumultuous, transcendent, desperate hope. And as he ran, he cried, "Lord! Lord! Lord" and every word was like the gasp of a strangling swimmer who clutches at a floating spar.

See how the people scatter right and left. Room for the leper! He reaches Christ and falls before him crying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Observe that Confession of Faith.

His faith shows itself not only in the address, "Lord, Lord!" but in his attitude; for he falls first upon his knees and then upon his face. It is manifest also in his saying, "If thou wilt."

Can faith express itself, then, with an "if"? Is not "if" the very shibboleth of doubt? Yes; but there are two kinds of doubt, as there are two twilights. One is the doubt of the self-sufficient man who loves and fondles his unbelief; and it deepens more and more into the gloom of hopeless night. But the other is as the twilight of the morning, which grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. This is the doubt of the "honest doubter" who would fain be rid of it. This is the "if" that does not turn its back upon the Truth, but runs and kneels and throws itself upon its face before Him. Let the man who thinks himself an honest doubter lay this touchstone to his sincerity, and prove himself by saying—

"Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
By fears within and foes without,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Observe, also, how the faith of this leper came into immediate, vital contact with the sympathy of Christ. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, said, 'I will.' Let it be noted that, however Jesus may have delayed the cure of other patients, on occasion, he never hesitated once, for a moment, to answer a leper's cry.

And as he spake to this man, he "put forth his hand and touched him." The people from a distance saw this and were amazed: Had he forgotten what

was written in the law, that one who toucheth a leper is unclean? Had he not just said, "I am come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it"? Yes; but here is a new and higher law introduced by the Lawgiver himself; as it is written, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Here is the Law of Love at its highest and best; that is, in the form of sympathy. "And, *having compassion,* he stretched forth his hand and touched him." O blessed hand! The earthly life of Jesus was a continuous reaching forth of the divine hand. The incarnation is God touching humanity and coming into sympathetic union with it. The workshop, the weary journeys, the hunger and thirst and persecution, the holy passion; these are God's suffering with us. And the culmination of that sympathy is at the cross, where God makes bare his arm and touches man so closely as to exchange personalities with him, putting himself into man's place, and taking vicariously into his own body the shame and penalty of human sin. In our search for a true "theory of the atonement," may we not pause here? The cross is not violation of law, but fulfilment of it. The cross is the life-giving touch of the Elder Brother laid in compassion upon the children of men. It is written that "Mercy and truth meet together, and Righteousness and Peace kiss each other" at Calvary, because the divine Code reaches its consummation in this manifestation of love.

But how is it that Jesus was not polluted when he touched the leper? "Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled?" Aye; this Man could. The sun can shine upon a heap of offal with impunity, because it

has "healing in its beams." In this we have a flash-light into the nature and character of Christ. Let no man, who cannot heal leprosy, presume to touch a leper! Let no priest in whose veins runs the life current of hereditary and actual sin presume to say, *Absolvo te!* He only, who by virtue of immaculate personal purity can so emit virtue as to remit sin, may venture to touch the defiled, since the leper is no longer leprous when once he has touched him. The hand is not polluted because the patient is cleansed by it. O wonderful hand! The only hand in the universe that could do it! And God in Christ is ever drawing near, in this manner, to touch us. There is no aloofness in him. At the approach of the drab or the drunkard the crowd parts asunder and the saints withdraw their garments, saying, "We are holier than thou!" But he, the Holy One, touches them and speaks the word of power "Be thou cleansed!"

This leads us to observe, again, how the faith of this leper evoked an instant demonstration of power.

The word of Jesus was with authority; and it was an authority that appealed to no power above or beyond itself, but drew upon an inward Source. He used no priestly formula, "In the name of God"; but spoke for himself, "I will; be thou made clean!"

But was there power behind it? Authority is not power; nor is it valid except it be buttressed with it. The people looking on were moved, no doubt, to say within themselves, "It is easy to say Be thou cleansed, but let us see whether the healing power is resident in him."

And look! The man has leaped to his feet, a leper no more! The ghastly hue of the living death has

gone; the scales have fallen from his face; his flesh has come again as the flesh of a little child. The hand of Christ has healed the touch of "the finger of God."

What does this mean? How did the people interpret it? Did they say, "By this we are given to understand that Jesus has power to heal all manner of diseases, even this loathsome and ineradicable one"? If so, they came infinitely short of apprehending its full significance. Here is the fallacy in Christian Science and all the healing charlatanries. They are utterly selfish, and physically selfish at that. They proceed upon the assumption that religion is first and foremost a therapeutic system. As if the chief end of man were to rid himself of gout and rheumatism! As if the bodily comfort of this handbreath of threescore years were worthy to be measured against the spiritual life of unending æons! No, no; the meaning of the miracles lies further on.

The real point of them is to show that Jesus is the great Forgiver. He did not come from heaven to work miracles; his miracles were a mere incident along the way. In a world full of sufferers it was a matter of comparatively small moment that he should be able to heal a few sick people in a little Province in a remote corner of it. But if he could thereby demonstrate his power to forgive sin, if he could make that manifest to all the world and through all the generations to come, ah, that would be worth while! Millions of sinners were longing for it; millions and millions yet unborn were destined to groan and travail for it. And this was the true significance of his works of healing. The opening of blind eyes meant, The

Son of Man hath power on earth to restore spiritual sight. The healing of fever patients meant, The Son of Man hath power on earth to quell the wildest passions of the heart. The healing of paralytics meant, The Son of Man hath power on earth to restore enfeebled souls. The cleansing of this leper meant, The Son of Man hath power to wash away the scarlet stain of sin. He is mighty to save! He is able to save to the uttermost all that will come by faith unto him.

But now, observe the severe test which was put upon the faith of this convalescent leper.

Jesus said unto him, "See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself unto the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." A strange injunction surely. What was the purpose of it?

The man was to say nothing of the work which had been wrought upon him. Was this because Jesus would save him from self-importance, such as we sometimes witness in the testimony of those who exploit their former accomplishments in vice? Or was it that Jesus would avoid a throng of suppliants for healing, such as would interrupt his great work of preaching the things of the kingdom of God? Or was it that he desired to stem the increasing tide of his own popularity and thus prevent such a provocation of the religious leaders as would precipitate the tragedy which he was to accomplish in the behalf of men? In any case the reasons were sufficient to the mind of Jesus himself; and his word should have been ultimate to this man.

But the test was a severe one. Put yourself in the

leper's place. He was required to hold his peace and proceed at once to the temple. He must not go home to tell his loved ones. No backward look to the lepers still unhealed and dwelling among the rocks! No tarrying by the way. Straight to the temple!

Now this involved a silence of a fortnight or more. It would take a week or thereabouts for him to reach Jerusalem; and another week for the official examination at the gate, and then another for the offering of the turtle doves and the oblation of thanks and the priestly anointing, and the final pronouncement, "Thou art clean!" Not until then would the ban of silence be lifted. "Open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise!" Think what a burden this put upon a heart that was bursting with eagerness to proclaim its joy.

At this point the leper's case broke down. He could not endure the test; he "began to publish it much and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter the city, but was without in desert places." Let it not be supposed that the intent of Christ's injunction was to prevent him from making an open confession. He merely wished him to go about it in the right way. He was to lose no time in empty talk. There must be no impulsive outcry, but a calm orderly procedure.

Who shall say what the result would have been had he made his confession as Jesus prescribed it? "Go, show thyself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded *for a testimony unto them.*" See him in the presence of the great congregation, standing at the altar, with the sacrifice blazing beside him. So should he have published his gratitude far and wide.

This would have been a suitable confession of Christ: As when a Christian calmly and deliberately stands forth, in the presence of the congregation, to take the vows of the covenant upon him.

It would have served as a "testimony unto them"; that is against the rabbis who had cast Jesus out of the temple and driven him from the Holy City. It would have shown them that there was one who could accomplish what they could not. They might pronounce the leper cleansed, but Jesus alone could cleanse him.

And what a witness this would have been to the claims of Jesus as the very Son of God! What a protest against his rejection. To the Sadducees, who denied the supernatural, it would certify that the Supernatural was among them. To the Pharisees, who affirmed the sole efficacy of ceremonial observance, it would certify that there was One outside the temple who could do wondrous things. Let them hide their faces! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

The obvious lessons of this Miracle are three:

First; there is no salvation without a previous conviction of sin.

The living type of sin is leprosy, insidious, contagious, malignant, uneradicable. Oh, that the sinner might see his sin with God's eyes! Then would he indeed abhor himself, and, like this leper, break through all barriers to reach Him who alone has power to heal it.

The second lesson is the sole Saviourship of Christ.

There is no deliverance save by coming into vital touch with him. The sinner must put away all other

hopes, all confidence in other philosophies of salvation, all trust in self-righteousness. If the scale of leprosy be in the hand, will it help it to cut that off? If it be eating out the eyesight, will it heal the malady to pluck out the eyes? Nay; this leprosy is in the blood! Sin is through and through the nerve, sinew, fibre, heart, conscience and soul of man; and in all the world there is no cleansing save at the "fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins." "Come now, saith the Lord, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The last lesson is Exact Obedience.

When a man has accepted Christ, all the rest is doing what the Master bids him do. In a word, the Christian life is Obedience. To obey is better than sacrifice. It is not for us to ask our Lord's reasons, but to trust him. "His commands," says Watson, "ever carry meat in the mouth of them." Let us live, therefore, according to his holy will; running in the way of his commandments. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it!"

XVII

OUR FRIENDS IN HEAVEN

In which he converses with two glorified saints who manifest a deep interest in the affairs of men.

And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling. And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.—LUKE ix, 28-31.

A BEREAVED wife recently said to me, "I cannot help feeling that my dear husband knows all about my circumstances and is near me. We lived together forty years and our happiness was ideal. Do you suppose that he can be alive anywhere in the universe and not want to come to me? Tell me, is it right to believe that way?" There are multitudes of people who ask the same question; if an affirmative answer could be given, what consolation it would afford those who are passing through the Valley of Tears.

We hear, at the outset, the Testimony of the Heart. The Heart cries aloud and will not be silent, "Come back, O loved and lost, come back and comfort me!" But this is not proof. We want something more positive than the lonely cry and the outstretching of

empty arms. One of our poets has expressed it on this wise:

Beside the dead I knelt for prayer,
And felt a presence as I prayed,
Lo, it was Jesus standing there.
He smiled: "Be not afraid:"

"Lord, Thou hast conquered death, we know:
Restore again to life," I said,
"This one who died an hour ago."
He smiled: "She is not dead."

"Asleep then, as thyself didst say;
Yet thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away."
He smiled: "She doth not sleep."

"Nay then, tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,
Restore her to our hearts that ache;"
He smiled: "She is not gone."

"Alas: too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again our joy to touch
Until the stream of death we cross."
He smiled: "There is no such."

"Yet our beloved seem so far,
The while we yearn to feel them near,
Albeit with Thee we trust they are."
He smiled: "And I am here."

"Dear Lord: how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and Thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?"
He smiled: "Abide in me."

We turn from the Testimony of the Heart to that of

Reason. And here we are on dangerous ground; since Reason, of itself alone, is ever an untrustworthy guide in spiritual things. So long as it pursues a straightforward argument from data furnished by the five physical senses it can be trusted; but when it crosses the borders into the province of Faith it becomes a blind leader of the blind. This will account for the many lamentable and often grotesque errors of irreligious men in dealing with the question before us.

There is the error of the Sadducees, those rationalists of the olden time, who, recognizing no authority beyond that of Reason, argued themselves into a practical rejection of the supernatural. They held that life beyond the grave is an empty dream. "Death ends all."

And there is the error of the Pagan Mythologists, who peopled the earth with supernatural beings. Nymphs, Naiads, Oreads and Oceanides, Dryads and Hamadryads, they swarmed through the fields and forests, flitted along the shores of every stream, rode in chariots of clouds and whispered in the winds. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of a sublime and helpful truth.

The Romanists, also, by exceeding the bounds of Scripture and following their own imagination, have fallen into the lamentable error of paying divine honors to Angels and "spirits of just men made perfect." This would never have happened had they harkened to the voice of the Angel of the Apocalypse, who, when John fell down to worship before his feet, recoiled in horror, saying, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the proph-

ets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. xxii, 9).

And scarcely less deplorable is the error into which the Puritans fell, when in their repugnance to Mariolatry and saint-worship they swung to the other extreme and wholly ignored, if not denied, the ministry of saints and Angels. They put the spiritual world afar off, making it a cold and dreary place. Here is a sketch of it:

"Somewhere in desolate, wind-swept space
In Twilight Land, in No-man's Land,
Two hurrying shapes met face to face
And bade each other 'Stand!'

'And who are you?' cried one, agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light;
'I do not know,' cried the other shape;
'I only died last night!'"

But the worst error of all is that of the so-called Spiritualists, who profess to call back the departed and converse with them at will; engaging them in foolish and frivolous tricks, with the lights turned down, such as ringing bells in closed cabinets and tipping tables and knocking on hollow walls; inducing them to peep and mutter nonsense beneath the level of dull scholars in our grammar schools. This is not only grotesque; it is hideous and abhorrent to common sense; since, whatever change may have been wrought in our beloved by their transition to the spiritual world, they are certainly not greater fools than they were when they dwelt among us. And whatever may be the ministries on earth, we have no reason to believe that they can be summoned at pleasure or conversed

with at will. The purpose of their earthly visitation is not to gratify curiosity or contribute to our entertainment, but to serve our best interests with reference to the present and future life.

We shall avoid all such errors by keeping close to Scripture. To the Law and the Testimony, therefore; what saith the Lord?

At the outset attention is called to the frequent reference made in the Scriptures to Angels.

Who are these Angels? It is often taught and generally supposed that they are a distinct order of beings, wholly apart from the human race. I do not believe that; nor do I believe there is any Scriptural ground for it. Objection has been made to the Sunday school hymn "I want to be an Angel" as expressing a desire after the unattainable: which would be a valid criticism if Angels and saints triumphant were different *genera.* In fact, however, the term "Angels" is used to characterize all the inhabitants of the spiritual world. So far as we are informed there is only one race of spiritual beings in the universe, and it embraces all who have ever been created in the likeness of God.

True, it is written of man "Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels" (Ps. 8, 5); but in this instance the word is *Elohim,* and the passage is rendered in the Revised Version, "Thou hast made him a little lower than God," the reference being to his participation in the divine characteristics. It is true, also, that man in his earthly life is lower than the inhabitants of the celestial world; but Christ himself affirms that this inferiority is removed by death where he says, "They are equal unto the Angels and are the

children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx, 36).

The host of heaven may consist, for aught we know, of multitudes from other worlds as well as from our own. Among them there are different orders, indicated by such titles as angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, authorities, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers and saints triumphant; but this fact does not prove any racial distinction any more than the existence of ranks and titled orders among men. All are alike in having been created as rational beings after the divine image. Some have never been defiled with sin, having "kept their first estate"; others are sinners saved by grace. "One family they dwell in him."

We turn now to a consideration of the Employment of these heavenly beings. This is twofold. They are represented as "before the throne of God, praising him in his temple." This is their *leitourgia,* or devotional service; and the Scriptures abound with references to it. But their other form of employment is the *diakonia,* or ministry. This brings us immediately to the matter in hand.

The very name "Angel" is significant of ministry. It means literally a messenger or one sent forth. It was the belief of Cardinal Newman that our world is everywhere pervaded by spirits, who are sent hither as divine agents, not only in spiritual matters; not only in the directing of social and political affairs, but even in the control of the elements: as it is written, "He maketh his angels winds, his ministers a flaming fire." Without going so far, we are bound to affirm, as the consistent teaching of Scripture, that

they are sent out everywhere as willing servants to do the divine will (Acts v, 19; xii, 27; etc.).

One of their special functions is to exercise a personal care for those who are living on earth.

This is the doctrine of "Guardian Angels." The fact that it is so frequently carried to a grotesque extreme must not frighten us away from the wonderful and blessed truth. Jesus, holding a child upon his knee, said "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father:" on which Doctor Schaff, agreeing with most commentators, remarks, "It would seem the proper inference that every believer has his Guardian Angel." But even this interpretation is too narrow: Why confine it to "every believer"? If it suggests the doctrine of Guardian Angels at all, it teaches that they watch over the interests of all the "little ones" (see also Psalm xci, 11, 12; Luke xv, 10).

But a still more particular care is exercised by these Angelic ministrants over those who have allied themselves with the service of Christ. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says they are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And David says more specifically, "He shall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

It is our purpose to avoid all speculation at this point and to confine ourselves absolutely to the teaching of the Scriptures. The Old Testament abounds in reference to the ministry of Angels. They appeared to Abraham (Genesis xxii, 11, etc.); to Jacob

(Genesis xxviii, 12); to Hagar (Genesis xvi, 7, etc.); to Balaam (Num. xxii, 23-35); to Gideon (Judges vi, 11); to Manoah's wife (Judges xiii, 3-20); to Elijah (1 Kings xix, 5, etc.); to Zechariah (Zech. i, 4, etc); and to many more. An angel led the Children of Israel out of Egypt "by the right way." An Angel "shut up the mouths of the lions" and delivered Daniel from his trouble. Once and again Angels interposed to save Israel in battle against overwhelming odds.

The New Testament is no less explicit. Angels foretold the Incarnation, heralded the wonderful event, attended on the ministry of Jesus, succored him after his temptation and in the Garden of Gethsemane, hovered over his cross in legions, rolled away the stone from his sepulchre and announced his resurrection. Angels appeared to Peter (Acts xii, 8); to Paul (Acts xxvii, 23); to Philip (Acts i, 26); to Cornelius (Acts x, 7); to John (Rev. i).

And the direct teaching of Jesus in this matter is conclusive. He not only affirmed the guardianship of Angels in the passage already referred to (Matt. viii, 10), but repeatedly made mention of their ministry among men.

In the Parable of Dives and Lazarus he expressly says that the soul of the devout beggar was carried by Angels to the blessed land (Luke xvi, 22).

In his thrilling portrayal of the Judgment he says, "The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the Angels" (Matt. xiii, 39), and, still more explicitly, "So shall it be at the end of the world; the Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just" (Matt. xiii, 49).

He assigns to these spiritual beings a special place in his ultimate triumph and universal reign on earth, announcing that when he comes it will be "in the glory of the Father with the holy Angels" (Mark viii, 38).

In his conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration he gives us to understand that the spirits of just men made perfect bear a closer relation to mundane affairs than is generally supposed. Here were two men who had lived five hundred years apart and had been dead more than a thousand years; yet they knew each other and felt a mutual interest in the earthly work of Jesus. They came from heaven to minister to him when the shadow of the cross fell over him as dark and cold as a winter's night; and "they spake with him concerning the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix, 31). The inference is inevitable that they, while in heaven, knew what was occurring and about to occur on earth, and, more, that they were under commission to assist in some of its important events.

One such visit is enough to demonstrate the fact that the saints triumphant share in the blessed ministry. Our own loved ones in heaven are among those who are "sent forth to minister for such as shall be heirs of salvation." They are "sent"; and, unlike Christians on earth, when they are sent they always go. And what could be more natural than that they should be sent to those whom they know and love and for whose welfare they are most profoundly concerned? "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

"Which of the petty kings of earth
Can boast a guard like ours
Encircled from our second birth
By all the heavenly powers?
With them we march securely on,
Throughout Immanuel's ground;
And not an uncommissioned stone
Our sacred feet shall wound.
Ten thousand offices unseen
For us they gladly do,
Deliver in the lion's den
And safe escort us through.
And when our spirits we resign,
On outstretched wings they bear,
And lodge us in the arms divine
And leave us ever there."

To the testimony of Jesus might be added that of his Apostles, who in all their writings recognize the ministry of Angels.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is quite clear: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them which shall be heirs of salvation?" And, later on—after an illustrious roll-call of heroes, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens—he utters this exhortation, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand

of the throne of God" (Heb. xii, 1-2). The Christian is standing as an athlete in the lists, waiting for the signal to speed toward the golden milestone for the Olympian wreath; and the galleries are filled with spectators—angels, saints triumphant, martyrs gone to glory—cheering him on. Oh, we are living in a larger world than we think! We are an object of heavenly solicitude in all our earnest efforts to quit ourselves as the children of God.

If these things are so, it follows that heaven is not "far, far away." It is nearer than we think. A veil of gossamer is all that separates us from the invisible. Death is but "a covered bridge, leading from light to light through a brief darkness." There is no interruption of the continuity of life. A line of shadow falls across our path; we step across and go living right on. The life beyond is merely the sequel of the life we are living now.

It follows also that everything depends on the way we spend these probationary years. This is merely an apprenticeship for eternal service. Whoever honors his commission, discharging every duty as it comes and rejoicing to minister to others, will receive the service-chevron. "He that is faithful in a few things shall be made ruler over ten cities." If we would find a congenial place in that world of which it is written, "There his servants do serve him," we must be faithful in this world. Ministry is our business, as followers of Christ; to "do good as we have opportunity unto all men." Our promotion to the ministry of Angels depends on our fidelity here and now.

And it follows, finally, that if our friends in

heaven are so deeply concerned in our spiritual welfare, we ourselves should be no less concerned. One passage, and perhaps the most important, in the teaching of Jesus touching the matter in hand, has been purposely deferred until this point: it is his reference to the concern felt by the inhabitants of heaven for the conversion of their friends on earth. "There is joy," he said, "in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv, 10). Are there mothers there, watching and waiting, like Monica on the shores of Africa, to hail the home-coming of their wayward sons? Do ministering spirits come to guide the feet of the prodigal out of dangerous paths? Is there a multitude of expectant ones in glory, eager to raise the song of thanksgiving when a sinner returns from the error of his ways? Then surely it behooves the recipients of all this care to shake off indifference and turn to Christ.

But the matter of supreme moment, after all, is not the interest felt by the Angels in our behalf, but that of God himself, by whom they are sent to minister to us. This was the thought which most deeply impressed Jacob after his vision of Angels at Bethel: "Verily, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!" He was a lone wanderer, a fugitive from justice, a sinner oppressed with a sense of retribution; and, lo! God loved him, nevertheless, and sent his Angels to comfort and encourage him. O gracious God, we wander not beyond the tether of thy love! Awake us from indifference, break our stubborn hearts with the conviction of thy loving care. O blessed Son of God, who not only sendest thine angels to allure us

from sin to salvation, but thyself standest at the closed door of our hearts, knocking and waiting until thy locks are wet with the drops of night, we surrender to thy love! We unbolt the door! Come in and sup with us!

XVIII

FAULT-FINDING

In which reference is made to one of the most delicate and difficult of duties.

Jesus to his disciples: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."—MATT. xviii, 15.

Also, "If thy brother sin, rebuke him."—LUKE xvii, 3.

THE most difficult and delicate, the most neglected and overdone, the most disagreeable and magnanimous of duties is fault-finding.

Jesus was the friendliest man that ever lived. He came from heaven to do two things: first, to make atonement for sin; so that all who are willing to receive him by faith should not perish, but have eternal life. And second, to set an example of right-living, so that all who are willing to follow in his steps may attain to character in the full stature of a man.

We, then, who profess to believe in Christ as our Saviour are to receive him as our Examplar in the right discharge of the duties of life.

Jesus was a fault-finder, distinctly so. He spared neither his foes nor his friends, on occasion. In the interest of truth and righteousness he laid bare the utter meanness and insincerity of the religious leaders of his time, saying, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, generation of vipers; how shall

ye escape the damnation of hell?" Nor did he spare his disciples when reproof was in order; as when he said to angry John and James, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of"; and to tempting Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou savorest not the things that be of God but those that be of men." We must be fault-finders, therefore, if we propose to follow in his steps.

The censorious man is ubiquitous: like the poor, ye have him always with you. All sorts of colloquial titles are applied to him; but, call him what you please, he is never agreeable. A scold at home, a pessimist in society, a mugwump in politics, a martinet in the church; he is everywhere a cumberer of the ground. Nothing suits him; nobody pleases him. He is like Momus among the ancient Gods; who ended his lifelong career of criticism by finding fault with Vulcan's man because he had no windows in his breast so that people might see what was going on within; with Neptune's bull, because his horns were not beneath his eyes so that he might direct his attack; and with Minerva's house, because it had no wheels to enable her to move away from troublesome neighbors. For this, Momus was cast out of Olympus; unfortunately we cannot get rid of the censorious fault-finder in that way.

The man at the other extreme, however, is no less insufferable. He sees the strong pursuing the weak and has nothing to say. He hears the truth denied and keeps silence. The times are out of joint; but why should he trouble himself to correct them? Evil-doers are abroad; but who set him as watchman upon the heights? If he be a preacher, he preaches smooth

things, flattering the infirmities of those who have itching ears. His philosophy is briefly contained in the proverb, "The crooked cannot be made straight." He sees the wounded man on the Bloody Way and placidly leaves him to the good Samaritan. He is a cynic, serene as Diogenes, who asked nothing of the passer-by but that he would stand out of his sunlight. He has never heard the injunction, "Cry aloud and spare not and show the people their sins!"

Let it be understood that fault-finding is a duty. True friendship dares to wound. As Seneca said, "I love not my friend if I offend him not." Or as Moses said, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Or as Jesus said, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him."

But fault-finding is more than a duty; it is an art. The thing must be done; but the question is, How to do it? And here is where the example of Jesus helps us. This duty, like all others, must be interpreted in the light of his teaching and example. Our present purpose is to discover how Jesus did it.

At the outset the motive must be looked at.

Jesus said he came into the world to seek and to save. And whatsoever he did was in line with that purpose. Our life as his followers must be formulated along the same benevolent lines. In all our criticism of friends and foes alike, we must be actuated by a supreme desire to bring them back to truth and righteousness. There is no room here for envy or malice. The philosophy of the world is briefly comprehended in the words of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" with which the philosophy of Christ is distinctly at odds. A man is discovered in

the act of committing suicide. Christ says, "We must save this man." Cain says, "It is his own affair; let him hang." Christ says, "No; he is my brother and I am his keeper; I cannot let him hang." Cain says, "Is not his life his own? Is not the rope his own? May he not do what he will with both?" Christ says, "No, it devolves upon us to see that he does no harm to himself." Cain says, "He is a cumberer of the ground and the world would be well rid of him." Christ says, "No; there are divine possibilities in him; let us put him on his feet again." And to all his people he cries, "Come, let us cut this man down and make a better man of him!"

We observe, further, that Jesus was always just in his fault-finding, and in this we must be like him.

But there is the difficulty. We know little about justice. We are so ignorant of the motives and the singular trials and temptations of men.

> "Who made the heart, 'tis he alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each string, its various tone,
> Each chord, its various bias."

It was an easy matter for Jesus to be just, because he knew what was in man. We are to exercise justice only in cases where the moral quality of the act is perfectly clear; in other cases we must needs condemn the sin, but leave the sinner with God. And in no case are we at liberty to pass hasty or ill-considered judgment on any of our fellow-men.

It is said that when the Roman magistrates sentenced a prisoner, they had a bundle of rods near by tied with many knots, to the intent that, while the

beadle was employed in untying them, the court might have time for a sober second thought. Alas, we oftentimes lay on the rod and do our thinking afterward! The Scriptural rule is, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

And again, if we are to be like Jesus in the discharge of this duty, we must be clothed with charity.

This does not mean that we are to be oblivious of wrong or injustice. They say that love is blind. But "Charity thinketh no evil"; that is, it puts the best construction upon the conduct of a man. It prefers to see the good rather than the bad. It recognizes the fact that there is a bright side to the character of every one. There is a Russian fable which says that the swine Kavron made its way through the gardens of a lordly mansion into the barnyard, where it reveled in filth. On its return the neighbors cried, "What found you, Kavron? They do say that the garden is full of flowers and the house of pearls and diamonds!" And Kavron answered, "I found naught but heaps of offal." Thus the critic finds what he is looking for; and our perverted nature not infrequently prefers to find the evil rather than the good. The part of charity is never to expose the evil for the sake of comment or exposure, but always with the intent of correcting it.

We have further light on the proper discharge of this duty in the words of Jesus, "Why beholdest the mote in thy brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

This is but another way of saying, "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." The fact is we are prone to criticise in others the faults to which

we ourselves are most liable. "It takes a rogue to catch a rogue." Spurgeon tells of a well-known lunatic who used to go up and down, muttering, "God save the fool!" So Shakespeare says,

> "The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
> May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two,
> Guiltier than him they try."

It does not follow, however, that we are to be estopped from fault-finding by reason of the fact that we are conscious of sin. But we are bound to be assured that we are bravely resisting in ourselves that which we condemn in others. A man with a flask in his pocket is a poor preacher of temperance. It would lend weight to the argument of the Army Officers who are just now pleading for a restoration of the beer canteen, if the public could be advised that they themselves were temperate men. "Take heed to thyself; first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

And it behooves us to be open and aboveboard in our criticism of others.

The rule of Jesus is, "If thou hast aught against thy brother; go tell him betwixt thee and him alone." No gossip. No backbiting. Come out of your covert! Out into the open! The meanest man in Scripture is Shimei, who threw mud and stones at David from behind a hedge. It is to the credit of Paul that he "withstood Peter to the face"; and history records that they were the better friends for it. But this is not the usual way. A tells B that C is no better than he ought to be; their wives discuss it over the tea

cups; and all the neighbors are by the ears. Dean Swift says they

> "Convey a libel with a frown
> And wink a reputation down;
> Or, by the tossing of a fan,
> Describe *the lady and the man!*"

This is the part of cowardice and ill-becoming in those who profess to follow Christ.

It must be added that fault-finding, after Christ's method, requires the utmost tact.

Take care! A mote that has imbedded itself in the tissues of the eye cannot be extracted with the naked hand, much less with red-hot pincers. The most insufferable man in the world is the one who speaks of himself boastfully as "a blunt man." He "calls a spade a spade," and delights in saying unpleasant things. His method is the very opposite of Christ's. What tact and gentleness were displayed in his rebuke of Peter, who had denied him thrice with a bitter curse; he turned and looked at him, and Peter "went out and wept bitterly." That look had exposed the dark recesses of his soul. And what skill was displayed in Christ's reproof of the woman at the well. He saith unto her, "Give me to drink." She answered, "How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me who am a Samaritan?" He saith, "If thou knewest who it is that saith, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked and he would have given thee living water." She saith, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." He answered, "*Go call thy husband* and come hither!" It was at this point that the iron entered

her soul; and thus he drew the sinner to him. Or where will you find such tact and tenderness as in Christ's treatment of the poor creature taken in adultery and dragged before him by the religious leaders who clamored for the extreme penalty of the law. He saw her contrition in the hiding of her crimson face. He stooped and wrote his judgment on the pavement: "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her!" He rose and, finding himself alone with the woman, said, "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

It remains to be said that those who would follow Christ in the discharge of this duty must have in mind the ultimate law of requital; as he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

In other words, the censorious critic will have to change places with his victim one day. It is with this fact in mind that we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

> "The mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me."

Here is no reference to the *lex talionis*. God does not judge in the spirit of vengeance; but, in the necessity of the case, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The Law of Requital works automatically. Haman is always hanged on his own gallows-tree. "A man is his own dungeon"; he treasures up wrath against the day of wrath; he determines for himself what sentence the Law shall pass upon him.

If we want mercy in the Great Day, we must needs grant mercy here and now.

Wherefore, let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us. He spared neither friend nor foe; but his wounds were always the wounds of a friend. The severest woes that ever fell from his lips were followed by the kindest of invitations: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The tenderest rebuke that ever was administered was from the Cross:

"I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me
As near the cross I stood.

"Sure, never till my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

"Alas! I knew not what I did,
But now my tears are vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid,
For I the Lord have slain!

"A second look he gave, that said,
'I freely all forgive:
'This blood is for thy ransom paid;
'I die that thou may'st live.'

"Thus while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon, too!"

He "knew what was in man" and "covered" his

faults by expiating them. He was aware of the imperfections of those to whom he had assumed the relation of an Elder Brother; and, while he exposed them, he bore them also in his own body on the tree. He led his friends through the rough places of Via Dolorosa, because there was no other way to heaven's gate. He laid bare, as with a scalpel, the secret sins of men that he might heal them. It is written of him that knowing his disciples, their faults and shortcomings, he nevertheless "loved them to the end." In this we find the key-note of a Christian life: "God commendeth his love toward us in that *while we were yet sinners,* Christ died for us."

XIX

FORGIVING

In which a Multiplex Emphasis is placed on a still more difficult duty.

Peter: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?"

Jesus: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."—MATT. xviii, 21-22 (*cf.* 23-25).

ALL the world loves Peter; brave, impulsive, headstrong, blundering Peter; the apostle of the great heart, open hand, hot temper and high ambition. But there were times when Peter showed himself in most unlovely ways. In some respects he was a very little man.

It was so here. He had been greatly stirred up by some things that Jesus had been saying about the proper way of dealing with unruly church members. In the Code of Discipline, as laid down by the Master, there were four steps. The first was. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone." If that failed, then, "Take with thee one or two witnesses and seek to arbitrate the difficulty." In case the offender were still obdurate, "Tell it unto the church," that he may be formally cited for trial. And should this also prove unavailing, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"; that is, Withdraw your fellowship from him.

Now, Peter had a personal interest in this matter, owing to certain grudges of his own. A self-willed, self-confident, self-opinionated man is sure to provoke animosities, and equally sure to resent criticism as a personal affront. It was, doubtless, this cherished sense of wrong which moved Peter to inquire, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" The teaching of the Rabbinical writings was, "If thy brother offend once and ask pardon, forgive him; if twice, forgive him; if thrice, forgive him; and that ends it." We may assume, therefore, that Peter, in suggesting seven times, supposed himself to be taking a most magnanimous view of the matter. But Jesus said, "Not till seven times, but till seventy times seven"; by which he meant that our spirit of forgiveness must know no limit at all.

And this he enforced by a parable; one of his great parables, involving a truth of supreme importance. The scene is laid in an Oriental court. A certain king, calling his satraps to a reckoning, finds that one of them is a defaulter in the sum of ten thousand talents; that is, about ten millions of our money. The man has no excuse to offer and he has nothing wherewith to pay. The decision of the king is that he shall be sold, with his wife and children, into slavery, a procedure which was in strict accordance with the Roman law. He thereupon fell down and besought him, "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." And his Lord did better than he asked; he forgave him all.

Then comes the sequel, on which the emphasis rests. The same servant went out and found one of

his fellow-servants who owed him the paltry sum of a hundred pence, equivalent to about seventeen dollars in our money; and he took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me what thou owest!" His poor debtor besought him, in the very words which the other had previously used, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all!" And he would not, but cast him into prison until he should pay the debt. Now when this came to the knowledge of the king he was indignant, saying, "O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all, because thou desiredst it; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servants, even as I had pity on thee?"

And he delivered him over to the officers of the law.

Then the lesson: "*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.*" The same truth is repeated once and again in the teaching of Jesus on other occasions; as where he says, "Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Also, in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." And, in general terms, in the Golden Rule, "Do as ye would be done by."

In the contrast presented in this parable we have an emphatic presentation of the Doctrine of Grace, or mercy to the undeserving. We sing,

"Grace, 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to mine ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear."

The doctrine is emphasized and greatly clarified by the side-light which this parable throws upon it.

On the one hand, we have in bold relief *the Grace of God,* as illustrated in the King's magnanimous treatment of his servant. This Grace is manifest in the atonement of Christ, who said of Himself, "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

Sin is a debt incurred to the Law; and the Law is a hard creditor. It records in a great ledger, called "The Handwriting of Ordinances," all our transgressions, item by item. The sinner who is thus indebted to the Law is a defaulter, in that every item represents a wilful and inexcusable violation of known duty. And the sum total of his indebtedness shows him to be a hopeless bankrupt; he owes "ten thousand talents." The satrap was in default ten millions of dollars, with absolutely no assets; yet he had the effrontery to say, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all!" The revenues of a province would have been but a bagatelle in meeting such a debt. The sins of the sinner are as the sands of the seashore for multitude; and what can he offer as an offset? His penitence? Nay, there is no expiatory virtue in tears. His resolution to meet the obligation? It is a true saying, Hell is paved with good resolutions. There is absolutely no hope. The man passes into the debtor's jail and the door clangs behind him.

But as sin is debt, so pardon is remission. The Handwriting of Ordinances is blotted out. This is by reason of the "ransom" which Jesus paid; as it is written, "He nailed to his cross the Handwriting of Ordinances which was against us, taking it out of

the way." So that Mercy and Justice are reconciled in the pardon of sin.

The grace thus manifested to sinners is absolutely free. Grace and *gratis* are cognate terms. Now and then we hear of a creditor giving a receipt on this wise: "In consideration of the sum of one dollar, thus and so"; but not even such nominal remuneration as this is exacted from the sinner who has accepted the grace of God.

> "Long as I live I'll still be crying,
> Mercy's free, mercy's free!"

And this grace is extended to all; as it is written, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, let him come and drink"; and again, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." In no wise? Not if he be a thief or a murderer? Nay, if only he "come unto me." Heaven is full of such flagrant sinners saved by grace. Christ is able, and as willing as he is able, to save "unto the uttermost" all who thus come unto him.

And the gracious pardon is complete; that is, it covers the whole record of the misspent life. The sins of the sinner are blotted out, remitted, sunk into the depths of an unfathomable sea, cast behind God's back, so that he remembers them no more against him.

Is there no condition affixed to this proffer of grace? One only, the same condition which is affixed to every gift; to wit, that it shall be accepted. Faith is the hand stretched forth to receive it. "He that believeth shall be saved," that is, his debts are liqui-

dated; "and he that believeth not" is still indebted to the law; therefore "the wrath of God abideth on him."

God is a great forgiver! "There's a wideness in his mercy like the wideness of the sea."

But now we turn to the reverse of the picture. We have contemplated the grace of God; it remains to consider *the Grace of Man,* as brought out in the attitude of the satrap toward his fellow-servant. Observe the contrast, for here the emphasis lies. The only possible return that we can make for the divine goodness is to reflect it, as far as possible, in our conduct toward our fellow-men.

We have abundant opportunity for the exercise of Grace, since we have all been wronged. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." How could it be otherwise, human nature being what it is? But the servant is not greater than his Lord. In all the universe there is no man who has suffered such injustice as Christ. What "contradiction of sinners" he endured! He was misunderstood, forsaken, scourged, rejected, spit upon, put to an ignominious death. How small our wrongs appear in the light of his!

Do we resent them? Do we propose to exact payment of the debts which are owed us? Do we take our adversary by the throat? Alas, how persistently we cherish the memory of injustice and unkindness. Old grudges rankle within us. We have much to say about domestic feuds in the South, and about the Mafia that sends its agents across the ocean with vengeance in their hearts. But in a smaller, meaner and more cowardly way we often keep a memoran-

dum of gossip and misrepresentation in the hope of "evening up" some day. If a misfortune befall our debtor, are we sorry? Back in the dark places of our heart do we not somehow cherish the thought that, however he may defraud us here, a just recompense awaits him in the Great Day? Or if we consent to forgive, how many questions like Peter's arise, "How oft shall I forgive him?" or, "Suppose he is not sorry?" or, "Who shall take the initiative?" Thus we sweep the room and leave the dust behind the door. Oh, little people that we are! Far, far, indeed, is our spirit from the mind of God.

What is the right attitude, then? Grace. Pardon to the undeserving. God's Grace in our hearts pouring itself out again without stint. Love to the uttermost. Charity not to God's poor only, but to the devil's poor. Forgetfulness of grudges; "let bygones be bygones"; "let the dead bury their dead." Why? Because "to err is human, to forgive divine." The right spirit was exhibited by Sir Thomas More when, on being sentenced to death, he said to his unjust judge, "Sir, I am wronged; but I cherish no enmity against thee. As Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen and afterwards met him in heaven, so do I entertain the hope that by the mercy of Christ we may meet in the kingdom of God."

Now this is *the very heart of the Gospel of Reconciliation.* God by his Grace comes down to meet us, and we by the exercise of a similar Grace go out to meet those about us. This is "the truce of God," of which the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will toward men." Christ came to bring peace of a three-fold sort; peace with

God, peace with ourselves and peace with our fellow-men. And in this interchange of Grace betwixt heaven and earth lies the hope of that ultimate Utopia in which "Man to man, the whole world o'er, shall brothers be."

But how shall we attain unto it? *First,* by getting into vital communion with Christ; that is, by accepting him as the personal manifestation of the Grace of God. *Second,* by contemplating the divine grace, as exhibited on Calvary, until "the eye affecteth the heart." If the debtor in the parable had not forgotten what the king had done for him, he never would have dealt so hardly with his fellow-servant. If he had remembered the ten millions of dollars, he would not have been so particular about the seventeen dollars. So then, let us take our place on Calvary and, looking toward the cross, get some conception of what God has done in our behalf. An Oriental poet puts it on this wise:

> Once staggering blind with folly on the brink of hell,
> Above the everlasting fire-flood's frightful roar,
> *God threw his heart before my feet; and, stumbling o'er*
> *That obstacle divine, I into heaven fell!*

Third, we shall assist ourselves into this attitude of Grace by forming a just conception of the Canon of Judgment which is to obtain on the Great Day; "For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

I have read somewhere of an old-time baron who, on hearing that an enemy who had grievously wronged him was about to pass his castle, put his retainers in martial array and said to his chaplain,

"Ere we go forth to our revenge, lead us in prayer." The chaplain said, "Let us go apart, thou and I, and say the Lord's Prayer." They repeated it together until they came to the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," where the baron dropped out. "My lord," asked the chaplain, "why art thou silent?" "I cannot say this." "Then arise and go forth armed to meet thine enemy; but so will God meet thee on the Great Day."

Is this hard doctrine? It is the teaching of Christ; and as followers of Christ we should understand it; since we profess to follow in his steps. He preached the doctrine of forgiveness, and he exemplified it. Was ever greater magnanimity than in his last prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"? Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us. If we are smitten, let us turn the other cheek rather than resent it. If we are wronged, let us not avenge it. A philosophy like this may entail a measure of suffering; but we shall enter into sympathy with our Lord in pursuing it.

"What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" said a master who had bound his slave to the whipping post. "He can teach me how to forgive you, Massa," was the answer. Aye, this our Lord can do: and in so doing he will make us "partakers of the divine nature." In Jesus we behold the vital union of God with humanity; here is man at his best, in touch with God. Emerson says, "His heart was as large as the universe, but there was no room in it for the memory of a wrong." Our imitation of Christ is the measure of our approach to the full stature of manhood. And as Christians we are bound to imitate him in all things.

At whatever cost, we must be Christlike, for a true Christian speaks on this wise: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

XX

THE IMPLACABLE LAW

In which he exposes a number of Common Mistakes about sin and retribution.

Jesus, to certain who told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices:

"Think ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem?"
—Luke xiii, 1-5.

The Lord had been speaking of signs and omens. He knew that in less than forty years the City of Jerusalem was destined to go down in fire and blood; and he reproached the religious leaders for their blindness and indifference: "Ye are weather-wise," he said, "but deaf to the mutterings of the offended law. O mask-wearers, ye can interpret the lurid skies; how is it that ye discern not the signs of the times?"

Now there were among his hearers some who had been present at a bloody fray which had recently occurred within the precincts of the Temple. A group of Galileans were engaged in offering sacrifices there, when a detachment of troops from the Castle of Antonia fell upon and slew them, derisively sprinkling their blood upon the altar. It was the fashion then,

as it is now in some quarters, to attribute such calamities to the retributive justice of God. So this massacre was interpreted by those who mentioned it on this occasion as a token of the divine displeasure on account, probably, of the departure of these Galileans from their ancestral faith.

But Jesus detected the false note; "Suppose ye," he asked, "that the victims of this calamity were sinners above the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" And he went on immediately to refer to another occurrence of similar import: "As to those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam recently fell; think ye that they were sinners above all that were in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" The event to which he here referred was one of a class, such as the recent disaster in the mining regions of Pennsylvania or the burning of the Iroquois Theatre in Chicago, which invariably give rise to vexing questions as to God's hand in the matter. The falling of this Tower of Siloam is referred to by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who attributes the lamentable death of the eighteen workmen to the fact that they allowed Pilate to pay them their wages out of the sacred treasury. For this they died the death!

Christ took issue with this view. And in the light of his teaching we are enabled to correct a considerable number of misapprehensions as to the relation of sin and punishment which were not only in the minds of his hearers then, but are widely entertained even at this day.

I. There is, to begin with, the idea that God is a

Martinet, with whip of scorpions in hand, ever on the watch for sin and eager to inflict the penalty of it.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We are bound to affirm, of course, that nothing happens without God. "Doth trouble spring out of the ground?" (Job v, 6.) The lot is cast into the lap; but the disposing thereof is with the Lord. No theory of Providence can be correct which removes any event whatsoever from the divine purview. The universe is under law; and God is *Deus ex machina.* In the operation of this machinery of the universe it is inevitable that sin should produce its normal results. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," is written not more clearly in Scripture than in the nerves and sinews, the mind and conscience, of man. If God interferes with the calm operation of that law, it is only through the interposition of some higher law. All things are under law. There is no chance, no haphazard. The sowing and the harvesting are yoked together as cause and effect. And God thanks no man for an apology for his management of affairs; the end of controversy being in his words, "Be still and know that I am God!"

Were it not for this control the universe would be confusion worse confounded. God's domain is not chaos, but cosmos. Order is the first law of earth as of heaven, of mind as of matter. As in the "Combined Harvester" which reaps and threshes while rolling through the yellow field, so natural law and Moral Law unite to carry out the divine behest. And the saving factor in the otherwise bewildering problem is our confident assurance that the great Hus-

bandman, whose name is Love, has his eyes and hand upon all.

II. It is a mistake also to suppose that all Suffering is the Immediate Penalty of Sin.

Here is where Job's comforters erred. "Who ever perished," they asked, "being innocent; or where were the righteous cut off?" This idea is easily confuted by the manifest inequality of rewards and punishments among men. The innocent suffer on every hand, and the wicked man is not infrequently exalted so that he flourishes like a green bay tree. The bad boy who robs an orchard does not always fall from the tree; the lad who goes skating on Sunday does not always break through and drown. This is a juvenile way of looking at things and does not represent the divine method of administering justice. The merchant who loses his wealth is not warranted in concluding that his calamity was necessarily due to dishonesty in the management of his business. The bereaved husband who recently met me at the doorway of his desolated home with the exclamation, "Oh, what I have done that God should so afflict me?" was a poor philosopher. It is true, indeed, that all suffering is directly or indirectly due to sin; but much of it is the result of a long train of circumstances. The twinges of rheumatism which I feel occasionally may not be traceable to any offence of mine against natural law, but to the fact perhaps that my great great grandfather once sat in a draught and, contracting the malady, has passed it on. Nevertheless, there is enough of truth in the immediate consequences of such sin to admonish us against the danger of trifling with the laws of health. "Sin no

more," said Christ to the man of Bethesda, "lest a worse thing come upon thee."

It should be remembered, moreover, that some of our sufferings are not consequential but corrective. Does God send trouble, then? Sometimes; else he would be less kind and considerate than earthly parents are towards their children. So it is written, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh that corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. xii, 6-10).

III. It is a further mistake to think that the Punishment due to Sin is always administered Here and Now.

The reaping of life's sowing is inevitable; but it may not come in this present life. We think of man as going about in a little circle of three score years and ten; but God sees him moving around the great circle of eternity; and at the centre of that great circle is the Judgment Throne. Justice is a sure paymaster; but it does not settle with us every thirty days. God can afford to wait patiently for men to repent, since "the eternal years are his." This accounts for

the fact that oftentimes the wicked go through life unscathed. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii, 9). "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small; though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all."

When the balance is finally struck, criticism will cease; all will then confess that the "judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." In the meantime we trust in Providence and calmly await the final adjustment. And a moment's thought will convince us of the reasonableness of the present order; since, as Augustine wisely said, "If no sin were punished in this life, men would refuse to believe in Providence; but if all sins were punished here, they would refuse to believe in a final Judgment."

IV. It is a mistake, also, to think that Vulgar and Conspicuous Sins are more Culpable than others or more Offensive in the sight of God.

This was the view entertained by those who spoke to Jesus of the lamentable death of the Galileans in the Temple Court, and of the workmen who had accepted their wages from Corban. "Well might the sword drink their sacrilegious blood; well might the tower fall upon them!" The reply of Jesus was to this effect, "Although your sins may be less apparent, unless ye repent ye also shall die."

It is the fashion in our time to cry out against certain flagitious crimes and vices. What is to become of the drunkard who goes reeling through our streets;

of the cyprian who flaunts her shame before the public's eyes; of the thieves caught redhanded in the act? Let it be remembered, however, that all sin is vulgar and debasing in the divine sight. All sin is subversive of social order and in the nature of rebellion against God.

The drunkard and the drab shall meet their doom; but what of other and more respectable sinners? What of the mean man whose soul is shot through and through with avarice, whose life is full of self-seeking and oppression? Shall he escape, think you? True, he may not go to Sing Sing; but there are more cells in God's Sing Sing than in ours. A man may steal a loaf of bread and get thirty days for it, while he who steals a railroad gets a splendid mansion, lives in luxury, dies lamented and has a Latin epitaph on his gravestone.

But what of that? God's ways are not our ways; he sees with other eyes. Those who wear their faults "upon their sleeves for daws to peck at" are not necessarily sinners above all the Galileans; nor must we hastily conclude that the culprits who are summoned before our Police Courts are more to blame in the larger view than many who sit comfortably at home arrayed in purple and fine linen. The tower of Siloam does not fall on all evil doers.

In one of Paul's letters to Timothy he says, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after." Do you see the startling figure? It is of two men on their journey to the Great Assize. One of them is preceded by his sins; great, loud-mouthed, boastful sins, going before him like heralds with trumpets at their lips, call-

ing, "Behold this man! A great criminal, a thief, a murderer, an habitual drunkard! See the brand on his forehead! The works of the flesh are manifest upon him; behold his red eyes, his bloated countenance! He has disgraced himself, his neighbors and his friends. Make way for him as he hastens to his doom!" The other walks erect as one accustomed to adulation and obeisance. No accusers go before; but they follow him stealthily; hiding, slinking, ghostly pursuers hovering on his steps. These are gentle sins, respectable sins, such as meanness, penuriousness, worldliness, selfishness, impiety, sins of omission, sins done in a corner, secret sins, sneaking sins. They follow like the fabled Furies on wool-shod feet, in silent swift pursuit, making no outcry, but leering, whispering, knowing how sure they are to overtake him at the judgment bar of God.

V. Another of the mistakes which Christ corrects is the supposition that Proficiency in the art of Detecting Sin in other people is an Evidence of Personal Righteousness.

He straightway turns the thought of his hearers from the Galileans to themselves: "Let those unfortunates alone," he says, "and look to your own sins!" A detective is not necessarily the best of men. On the contrary, "it takes a rogue to catch a rogue." Had David not erred so grievously in the matter of Uriah's wife, he would probably not have been so quick to denounce the theft of the little ewe lamb.

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel'
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell.
Your neebor's fauts and folly:—

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin'!

No sin is more severely dealt with in the teaching of Jesus than habitual censoriousness. Of the two men who went up to the temple to pray,—the Pharisee who proudly said, "I thank thee, God, that I am not as the rest of men; unjust, adulterers, extortioners, or even as this publican!" and the publican, beating on his breast and crying, "God be merciful; I have nothing to plead but my unworthiness,"—he said, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

And on another occasion, when the self-righteous Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery, saying, "Moses in the Law said that such as she shall be stoned; but what sayest thou?" he stooped and wrote on the dust of the temple floor—his only written sermon—and when they read, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her," they went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest. See them, the cowardly censors, so hard on open sin while their own characters are honeycombed with secret sin, see them slinking out of his presence for very shame and self-contempt!

VI. And another mistake, one that is extremely prevalent in our time, is the supposition that the God of the New Testament is a Milder Magistrate than the God of the Old Testament.

In fact the God of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament are one; since Christ is the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He introduced no new philosophy of sin when, in the fulness of time, he came into the world to deliver sinners from the penalty of it.

Let those who insist that Jesus in his teaching antagonized the stern philosophy of the Law and the Prophets, find if they can anywhere in the Old Testament such denunciations of sin and forewarnings of retribution as fell from his loving lips.

Who was it that spoke of the fire that is never quenched, of the worm that dieth not, of the outer darkness and the bottomless pit?

Who was it that said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire"; and, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one hand, rather than having two hands to be cast into the everlasting fire"?

It goes without saying that the punishments to which he referred are not physical, since flesh and blood shall have no part in the future life; but, surely, he would never have used figures of such frightful import were it not that he intended to convey an impression of suffering beyond the possibility of words.

VII. One more mistake is corrected by implication in the teaching of Jesus; namely, that there is any more moderate or more reasonable View of the

Relation of Sin and Penalty than that which he presents.

It is obvious that the suggestion of a world controlled by chance furnishes no clue to the mystery. No more does the philosophy which supplants a personal God by the operation of insensate law. In this case all is rigid, merciless, implacable. If God be eliminated from the control of human affairs, then, as someone has said, "Nothing remains but teeth and claws." This is Karma, "the Law of Consequences," an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. In Huxley's exposition of Nature's laws, he says "We have here not a word and a blow, but more often a blow without a word; and we find out that our ears are boxed." This is too Draconian for us. This is too hard and implacable and hopeless for us. What shall we do to be saved from the horror of inexorable philosophies that have nothing to propose but exact retribution?

"To whom, Lord, shall we come but unto thee? thou only hast the word of eternal life." Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The great manifesto of the Gospel is in those words, "Except ye repent." You will search for it through all the false religions and philosophies in vain. Repent and live! The word flames like a beacon on the heights. It glows like morning light from the cross. Repent and live! And except ye repent, ye shall perish. All! Likewise! For there is no difference; since all are concluded under sin.

Repentance means sorrow for sin; not only for the punishment that ensues, but for the sin itself, because it is essentially hateful and abhorrent to God.

Repentance means, also, acceptance of proffered pardon in the divinely appointed way. No man is truly penitent who refuses to believe in Christ. This is the only door that has ever been opened out of the prison house; and to refuse to pass through it is to doom one's self to a life-sentence, which is spiritual and eternal death. Wherefore, look and live! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

And repentance means also avoidance of sin. No man is a true penitent who continues in any known sin. He who has accepted Christ and so passed from darkness into light, looks on sin with somewhat of the horror with which God regards it. He hates it with the loathing felt by Eleazar in the time of the Maccabees, who, when his teeth had been pried open and swine's flesh thrust between them, spat it out, crying, "Nay, rather let me die; I will have none of it!"

This is the philosophy of the gracious Christ. The same lips that uttered the fierce denunciation, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" a moment later said, as gently as a mother to an ailing child, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

There is no clue to the mystery of the divine hand in human affairs save in the teaching of this Christ. There is no way of escape from the implacable Law of Exact Justice save in his redeeming grace. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous." He lifts his wounded hands in perpetual intercession for us. Wherefore, if our sins weigh heavy on our souls and we sincerely long to be free, let us run to him.

XXI

PROFESSION AND PRACTICE

In which he lays bare the inconsistency of those who profess to be Christians while not closely following him.

Jesus, to his disciples and others who followed him: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great."—LUKE vi, 46-49.

"I WOULD be a member of the church if it were not for the inconsistencies of those who profess to follow Christ. It seems to me there are a good many people outside of the church who live better lives than others who are in it."

Who said that? The reader, very possibly. There are many people who, not professing to be Christians themselves, are more or less accustomed to call attention to the shortcomings of members of the church. And they are quite correct as to their facts. Moreover, Christ agrees with them. The touchstone which they are wont to use in these premises is one which he

himself has placed in their hands; to wit, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The two facts in religion, as the Master presented it, are Profession and Practice.

Profession is defined in the terms "Lord! Lord!"— a form of address which he approved, on this wise, "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am"— and the Practice is defined in the terms "doing the things which I say." On these facts religion goes *pari passu,* "at an even gait"; and the religion in which they do not go together has a lamentable limp in it.

So I say to these people, you are quite right in affirming that many Christians are not what they ought to be. It is my purpose for the moment to stand with you and make a frank statement of the matter as it appears to you. In the church you see three kinds of people: good, bad and indifferent. And this must needs be, as Christ said, "The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest." The three classes are clearly divided, by their various attitudes toward this question of Profession and Practice, as follows:

I. *Minimum Christians;* that is, such as make a profession, but do not practice it.

Their names are on the church-roll as "members in good and regular standing"; and this constitutes the sum and substance of their religion. They have no creed to speak of. As a rule they know little about doctrine and will frankly tell you that they care less.

They have no rigid rules of conduct; or, if so, they are not perceptibly influenced by them. Their joining the church has made no visible difference in their

manner of life. They cherish the same old habits and indulge in the same old sins.

And as for the service of the kingdom of Christ, they take no apparent interest in it. They stand idle in the market-place while the harvest goes on. All missions are alike "foreign" to them. In short, there is no difference whatever between these "Christians" and the world's people, so far as anybody can see.

Are they to be saved? They profess to entertain a hope of salvation; but their hope is like the railway ticket which a sleeping traveller wears in his hat-band so that the conductor may not disturb him. The danger is that they may presently wake up with a start to find that they have passed their destination without knowing it. For these are the ones to whom Jesus referred when he said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say."

The outcome of such an empty profession is illustrated by an incident in the life of Sir Isaac Newton. Being a very absent-minded man, he once caused his horse to be saddled for a journey, but, neglecting to mount, trudged on with the halter in his hand, deeply lost in meditation. The horse presently slipped his head through the bridle and ran away; but the philosopher, heeding it not, kept on to the toll-gate, where he awoke from his reverie to find that he was dragging the empty bridle after him.

The view of Christ himself as to such persons is presented in his parable of the Ten Virgins: "And while the foolish went to buy oil for their lamps, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was

shut. Then came also the others, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us! But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

So when you are disposed to criticise this sort of church members you may be sure that the Lord agrees with you. It is probable that in living thus inconsistently they imagine they are pursuing a popular course and gaining the friendship of the world. You yourselves have probably given them a hail-fellow greeting at times; but in your inmost heart, regarding them as maskwearers, you entertain a very proper and profound contempt for them. You know they are salt that has "lost its savor and is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

II. Then there are the *Medium Christians,* who make a profession, but compromise their practice of it.

These give the impression that they are trying to get to heaven with as little outlay of energy as possible. They are not "out-and-outers" in anything; but, like Redwald, the Saxon, whose motto was *In utramque paratus,* they face both ways.

If you ask them what they believe, they will offer you a creed which is made up of personal opinions. They read the last book on Theology, and accept its conclusions, if agreeable to their own prejudgments, without a thought apparently of what Christ would have to say in the premises. Of course you understand this is quite inconsistent with a true profession of Christ, since those who follow him as his disciples are bound to learn from him.

And their conduct is regulated by public opinion

rather than by any prescript of Christ. In order to determine any question of duty they go not to the Law and the Testimony, but to the prevailing fashion; and the determining factor in the problem is "Everybody does it." This also is manifestly inconsistent with the profession of a Christian life; since one who follows Christ as his King must pursue the line of conduct marked out for him, without any reference to what others think about it.

And the part taken by this class of Christians in the service of the kingdom is wholly a perfunctory one. It consists in attending church, partaking of the sacrament and going through with the conventional routine in the usual way. As for being co-laborers with Christ in the saving of the world, that does not seem to occur to them. They take no apparent interest in the welfare of souls. They sing, "Go Forward, Christian Soldiers!" and "Must Jesus bear the Cross alone?" with great gusto, but there is practically nothing in it.

Are they to be saved? Well, it is not for us to set bounds and limits to the divine mercy. We can say, however, that they are skating on thin ice and the danger signal is up. If they are saved, it will be as Lot was saved when he escaped from burning Sodom to the little village of Zoar. They will enter heaven "so as by fire." And heaven will not be to them what it will be to others who, by serving their apprenticeship here, have prepared themselves for promotion to higher service there.

It is a mistake to think that heaven is the same to all. A penny is one thing to a multimillionaire and quite another to his bootblack. So heaven will be,

to those who have put out their talents at usury, an opportunity of "ruling over ten cities"; while to others it will bring little or no promotion, because they have neither deserved nor qualified themselves for it.

The entrance to heaven is by divine grace, but the measure of its joy depends on what we make of ourselves here and now. I read the other day of an old man dying at seventy-five who had been an errand boy in one of our mercantile establishments for a period of sixty-four years. Alas for the man who is satisfied to live an ambitionless life, or content to look forward to a low place of service in the kingdom of God!

III. It still remains to speak of the third class, the *Maximum Christians.*

You know there are such Christians, for you have seen them. Your mother, perhaps, was one. And, thank God, there are many; enough to illustrate the power of the gospel to make character. You respect them; and you reverence the gospel because they show what it can do.

They take their belief from the teachings of Christ. Their creed is just as liberal as his was, no less, no more. They see him drawing lines between God and Mammon, between "the sheep and the goats," between Dives and Lazarus, between the world and the Church, between his followers and those who reject him, between the saved and the lost; and they are obliged to draw the same lines whether they like them or not. They want to be liberal and tolerant, and all that: but they cannot be any more tolerant or liberal than their Master was. And in thus living up to their

name, they commend themselves to your moral sense; you know it is the honest thing to do.

In their manner of life they adhere as closely as possible to the requirements of the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. The things which would be offensive to Christ they put off; and they put on the graces of his character. Their rule is that of exact obedience. This is not to say that they do not often offend and come short; they themselves would be the very last to profess perfection. But one thing they do, they put up a brave fight for what they believe to be true and right. They go out full panoplied and resolute against their besetting sins. Now and then you have seen a man, like Jerry McAuley, who has come up out of the slums and set himself to the task of getting the better of his meaner self and his old way of living. Down he went once and again, but never was vanquished. Up again and at it! They talk about the martyrs; but what was their courage to that of such men? A flash of the axe, the brief torture of the flames, and all was over. But these go through a long campaign of battles and win out. You reverence and envy such courage as theirs. You cannot help it.

Still further, such Christians take an active part in the service of Christ. It is not enough for them to build character for themselves; they do their utmost to save the fallen and bring the wandering back to God. They lend a hand to every Christian enterprise and send up their prayers for all faithful servants who thrust their sickles into God's great harvest. And this they do because they have heard their Master say three things: first, "The Son of Man is come

to seek and save the lost"; second, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you"; third, "Go." "Go down to thy house and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee." Go to Bethesda and minister to the cripples in the porches there. Go to Gaza, which is desert. "Go out into the highways and hedges." Go teach the children in the slums. Go to church when the bell rings. Go to your household tasks with joy. "Go speak to that young man." It is enough. His word of command is ultimate. They obey, as Jeremy Taylor says, "without sciscitation"; that is, asking no questions and interposing no objections. They rejoice to do his will.

What do you think of such church members? Are they to be saved, or not? Ah, you know that if heaven has any gates, they will fly open to these. If God has any mercy, it will embrace them. You may call them "bigots," because they believe precisely what their Lord says. You may call them "Puritans," because they live exactly as he requires them to live. You may call them "fanatics," because they run at his nod and beck. But you believe in them; and you believe in the sort of religion which they represent; and in your inmost hearts you know that you would do wisely to possess yourselves of it.

Now that I have preached a sermon for you who are in the habit of criticising members of the church, I am sure you will not resent it if I address a few personal words to you. If I have fairly represented your feeling in this matter, then you have gone so far that, in all reasonableness and honest logic, you are bound to go a little further with me.

First, then, you have made it appear that *you entertain a high conception of the Christian life.*

Alexander Pope said, "A Christian is the highest style of man"; Adoniram Judson, "A Christian is Jesus Christ's man"; Paul, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"; and Christ himself, "Ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you." You accept these definitions and know precisely what a Christian ought to be.

You know, secondly, that "other men's failures will never save you."

For obvious reasons you may take comfort in the fact that a considerable number of those who profess to be Christians are not living as they ought to. But in the Judgment that will be a matter of slight consequence to you. The Lord will say, "I died for you, made known to you the gospel of my grace, admonished you that the one condition of eternal life was faith in myself as your Saviour from sin, warned you with all possible earnestness that life was probationary and that death would crystallize your character forever, and exhorted you again and again to repent, believe and enter in life; what now have you to say for yourself?" I beg you to consider what sort of an exhibition you would make if, in answer to that question, you were to point your finger at John Doe or Richard Roe and say, "Lord, look at him!"

And, thirdly, you have paid tribute to Christ as the Perfect One.

You agree with the judgment of Pilate and of all history, "I find no fault in him at all." If there were not a single consistent follower of Christ among the hundreds of millions who profess his name, it would

not affect the fact that back of them stands this Perfect One, chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, able and willing to save unto the uttermost all who will come unto him.

Fourthly, in view of this admission, your duty is plain.

By your own acknowledgment the excuse which you make for inaction is a mere subterfuge. You are deceiving yourself; hiding yourself in what Isaiah calls "a refuge of lies."

And, fifthly, if it is your duty to accept Christ as your Saviour from sin, it is manifestly wrong not to accept him here and now.

By successive steps you have come into the immediate presence of Christ; and he stands before you with his hands stretched out. He asks an immediate decision. Not to decide, is to decide not. The end of your own logic is absolute and immediate surrender to him.

In the time of our Civil War there was much complaint on the part of those who remained at home because the progress of our armies was so slow. The men at the front were spending weary weeks in the Wilderness and in the trenches; while the carpet-knights were crying, "On to Richmond!" There was scarcely a civilian who did not indulge in sweeping criticisms on the conduct of the war. But when the troops returned, all that was changed. Many of them never came back, their bodies resting in nameless graves; but when the decimated regiments, thin and haggard, tattered and torn, went marching through the village streets, the Home Guards were silent while the Boys in Blue were cheered to the echo.

How will it be, think you, when the strugglers come up to heaven's gate? What will the Civilians have to say then? It were better to be a high private in the rear rank, one arm in a sling, hobbling on a crutch, wearing a torn and faded uniform, a thousand times better than never to have been in the service at all.

XXII

STUMBLING-BLOCKS

In which he has somewhat to say respecting a Stone in the Path.

Jesus, to his disciples and others: "Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."—MATT. xviii, 7-11.

THE occasion of our Lord's admonition, "Woe unto the world because of offences," was an act of intolerance on the part of some of his disciples, who came to him saying, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." And Jesus said, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." He then proceeded to emphasize the importance of helping and not hindering those who are trying to do good. "For whosoever," he said, "shall give you a cup of cold water to drink in my name,

verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward; and whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the depth of the sea."

The word here rendered "offence" is *skandalon,* which we have in our English words scandal and scandalize. Its literal meaning is a stumbling-block. Its significance, in this connection, is due to the fact that life is an uphill journey. One of Christina Rossetti's poems begins in this way: "Does the road wind up hill all the way? Yes, to the very end!" If that be so, how important it is that we should help and not hinder those who, worn and weary at the best, pursue the journey of life.

"It must needs be that offences come." We oftentimes do harm and impede the wayfarer without intending it. Influence is an automatic thing; it does not ask to be exerted, it exerts itself. No man liveth to himself, and, alas! no man dieth to himself. It is a serious thing to live, because our lives are so inextricably linked with other lives. We are like Alpine climbers, bound to one another, ever helping up or dragging down those who journey with us.

"But woe to him by whom the offence cometh!" Let us pause a moment here, lest the matter be pressed too far. You may offend a man's vanity, his ignorance or his prejudice; which is not a bad thing to do. Light is a stumbling-block to darkness. Truth is an offence to error. It is written of Christ himself that he was "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." His preaching was so full of "hard sayings" that he was moved to utter the caveat, "Blessed is he that is

not offended in me." His manner of life gave constant offence to the bigotry and self-righteousness of his enemies. He made no apology for his disciples when the Pharisees took umbrage at their plucking the wheat as they walked through the fields on the Holy Day. His cross is a perpetual occasion of offence to the ungodly. It is written, "We preach Christ crucified; to the Greeks foolishness and to the Jews a stumbling-block; but to them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, the wisdom and power of God."

We conclude that it is no sin, but rather a virtue, to offend the evil propensities of human nature. The sin lies in offending what is right and noble and divine in every man. For no one is so abandoned that he has not scruples and compunctions of conscience and longings for that which is highest and best. See that ye offend not those! It was with this moral sense of humanity in mind that Paul said, with reference to the meats which had been offered on the idol-altars of Corinth, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth." Had this abstinence involved the sacrifice of any moral principle on the part of the apostle, it would have been manifestly wrong in him to consent to it; but inasmuch as his own conscience was not pained by the sacrifice, while the weak consciences of the Christians of Corinth would have been grievously offended by his indulgence, he assumed an attitude of noble self-denial in protesting thus that he was willing to do all, suffer all, surrender all, in their behalf. To persist in any procedure which is wrong in itself, or which, while indifferent *per se,* gives offence to the

weak consciences of others, is to antagonize the spirit of Christ. Wilfully, deliberately, persistently to do that which offends the sense of righteousness or hinders the spiritual weal of any, is to part company with him who "emptied himself" in the behalf of men. It is the part of those who follow Him to lend a hand to everyone that is toiling up the steep way. As for him who deliberately gives occasion of stumbling, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were thrown into the depths of the sea."

I. A Man may be an Offence to Himself; that is, he may lay stumbling-blocks in his own path.

A quick temper, a prejudice against truth or sound morals, an evil habit of any sort, may be the obstacle in a man's progress toward the higher life. He may thus "stand in his own light" and be "his own worst enemy." It is such offences that the Lord had in mind when he said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." The eye of Eve offended her when she looked upon the fruit of the tree and "saw that it was good." The eye of Achan offended him when he looked on the golden wedge and coveted it. The eye of Lot offended him when, seeing that the Valley of Jordan "was well-watered," he proceeded to pitch his tent toward Sodom. If thou hast an envious eye, a wandering eye, a lascivious eye, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it were better for thee to go blind through life, than having two eyes to be cast into the fire of hell.

And the Lord continued, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." The hand of Adam offended him when he took of the forbidden fruit and ate it. The

hand of Judas offended him when he clutched the price of treachery. The hand of Cranmer offended him when he signed the recantation of his faith. "Burn, thou unworthy hand!" he cried, as the flames of martyrdom curled about him; "burn thou unworthy hand that didst betray me!" This was in pursuance of the teaching of Jesus: "It is better for thee to enter into life with one hand, than, having two hands, to be cast into the fire of hell." Wherefore let no man place stones of stumbling in his own path, but rather "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset him, that he may run with patience the race that is set before him."

II. The Followers of Christ may Offend those who are Without the Church.

Christians are a watched people. They are "compassed by a great cloud of witnesses." The galleries are full of those who scrutinize their walk and conversation; wherefore, it is of the utmost importance that they should live circumspectly, lest they inadvertently mislead others.

They may do this by an assumption of overmuch righteousness.

It is a serious mistake to give the impression that the Christian life is a monotonous routine of cross-bearing. To follow Christ is, indeed, a serious matter; but it is also the most delightsome thing in the world. "At his right hand are pleasures forevermore." To serve him consistently is to enter into the peace which passeth all understanding.

Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for "binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," for making the Sabbath intolerable by unnecessary exactions and

for frowning upon innocent pleasure. A similar charge is made against the Puritans by one of our historians, who says, "The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." All this is contrary to the spirit of Christ, who, at the marriage in Cana, turned the water into wine as if to indicate the blessed transformation of duty into pleasure which comes to all who rightly apprehend his interpretation of life. If God is our Father, if Christ has suffered for our salvation, if by faith we have entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, why should we not make merry and rejoice in him? Tasks there are, great duties and heavy responsibilities; nevertheless his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Christians not infrequently give Offence, also, by their Inconsistency.

It is rumored that there are some whose names are on the church-roll in good and regular standing who do not pay their honest debts; some who are not strictly honest in business transactions; some whose word is not above question; some who obliterate the deep-drawn lines which separate between the world and the kingdom of Christ. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. In the reproof which Nathan addressed to David in the matter of Bathsheba he said, "By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." In a like reproof which Paul addressed to the Roman Christians he says, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou

commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking of the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you."

And Christians offend, also, by their apparent Indifference to the Danger of those who Continue in Sin.

They profess to believe that the impenitent are under the doom of spiritual and eternal death; yet how often they utter no word of warning and lift no hand to rescue the perishing. The natural inference on the part of their unconverted friends is that they do not really believe in the teaching of their Master as to the inevitable consequences of persistence in sin. It was only yesterday that in this city a fireman climbed to the roof of a burning building and let himself down at peril of his life to save a woman who was clinging to the cornice and crying for help. If Christians mean what they say, such heroism as that should be common among them. But when they refrain not only from strenuous effort, but even from uttering words of warning and entreaty, they place a stone of stumbling in the path of the impenitent as really as if they lifted up their voices to say, "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace.

Nevertheless, when all is said with reference to Christian inconsistency, it remains that the impenitent are wholly without excuse; since the true example of godliness is to be found not in Christians, but in Christ himself. We do not set ourselves up as exemplars; but only as strugglers, doing our best, and quite imperfectly, to attain to a holy life. But

back of the church and back of all fallible believers stands the Perfect One. The reasonable course is not to look askance at our broken lives, but rather to gaze on him in whose life and character there was no guile. So long as Titian copied the works of Bellini and of Giorgione he was but an indifferent artist; but when he gave up the imitative method and went out to study nature itself, the fields and mountains, the sunsets and floating clouds, he made himself immortal. Why should thinking people turn their eyes on men whose breath is in their nostrils when the Truth incarnate is before them? *Ecce Homo!* In Christ are all the graces of character and of the nobler life. Look to Jesus, chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely!

III. Those who do Not Believe in Christ are in constant danger of Offending his Little Ones.

So much is said about the inconsistencies of Christians that we are likely to overlook this side of the matter. Yet here was the special reference of Christ: "Woe unto the world because of offences," that is, the stumbling-block which the world is ever placing before the feet of the weak and impressible, the unsophisticated and unsuspicious. How tenderly and graciously he refers to them as his "little ones." He is very jealous of them and will not suffer them to be wronged with impunity. "Woe to him that offendeth them! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were thrown into the midst of the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones."

At the time when this admonition was given, the infant Church was just beginning to suffer from

grievous persecution. Thanks to the influence of Christian civilization the era of sword and faggot has passed by. But those who inquire the way to Bethlehem must still face the finger of derision. In the case of many a man it requires more courage to stand before a burst of laughter than to march to battle in the face of an advancing foe.

The false teacher has much to answer for. It is not necessary to say, "I do not believe in God"; simply live as if there were no God and your lesson is taught. You need not say, "I have no faith in prayer," or "I doubt the inspiration of the Scriptures"; refrain from prayer and from reading your Bible, and others will take knowledge of it. You need not join the multitude who lead Christ to Calvary with shouts of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Hold yourself aloof from those who accept him as their Lord and Saviour, and your attitude will be perfectly clear. It is not necessary for one who would destroy his neighbor's garden to break through and tear up the fragrant plants; let him merely toss a handful of thistle-seed aloft and the wind will do the rest.

In any case, the force of silent example is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. A farmer on his way from the house to the stable on a snowy morning hears a voice behind him calling, "I'm coming right along, Papa," and looking back he sees his little son lifting his feet and carefully planting them in his footprints. Thus, no man liveth unto himself. Our children, our friends and neighbors, are coming "right along after us." See, therefore, that ye offend them not. A man may be willing to take his own

chances in denying truth and living an unholy life, but let him ponder well the fact that he is the centre of a coterie; that he is living or dying for others; that his children's children are coming after him.

But there is a positive side to all this. If by virtue of the silent, tremendous, self-propagating power of influence we are ever in danger of injuring others, by the same token we may be constantly doing good. It is for me to say whether my hand shall lay the stone in the path or be stretched forth to help. Blessed be God, there are multitudes of people who are unconsciously making their lives a blessing to all.

In our Museum of Art there is a picture by Gabriel Max called "The Last Token." A maiden stands in the arena, awaiting death for her devotion to Christ. On her left is a group of lions sated with flesh and unconcerned; on her right a ravenous beast with eyes aflame is just issuing from its cage. The galleries are filled with eager spectators. At the feet of the young martyr a rose has fallen from above. She stands with her hand upon a pillar, and her eyes, soon to be closed on earthly scenes, lifted to the balconies. They are searching for the hand that has dropped this token of kindness at her feet. Thank God, such simple deeds are possible to all.

There are many about us whose temptations are greater than they can bear and whose burdens are breaking their hearts. Friends, lend a hand! Put yourselves into a position where your influence will tell. Come over on the Lord's side and follow him, of whom it is written, "He went about doing good." Bind up the wounds of the man who has fallen on the Bloody Way; put the cup of cold water to thirsty lips;

speak the word in due season, which is like apples of gold in pitchers of silver. Live so well that you shall be blessing others, oftentimes without knowing it.

O the world is full of sighs,
Full of sad and weepings eyes;
Help your fallen brother rise,
While the days are going by!

XXIII

THE MISTAKES OF A PHARISEE

In which he puts a Respectable Gentleman to shame in the presence of a Woman of the Town.

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

The Pharisee, within himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner."

Jesus: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee."

The Pharisee: "Teacher, say on."

Jesus: "A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, therefore, will love him most?"

The Pharisee: "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most."

Jesus: "Thou hast rightly judged."—Luke vii, 36-50.

The scene is in the home of a Jewish gentleman at Nain. He is entertaining a company of friends at dinner; and Jesus is among them. His invitation was due, in all likelihood, to the prevailing interest in his Messianic claims. The host, as a loyal Jew, shared in the general expectancy of the coming of One "whom

kings and prophets longed to see, and died without the sight." Jesus had been heralded as the Messiah, and his own averment was positive and unequivocal: "I that speak unto thee am he." Nor was this claim without distinctive and singular proofs. On the one hand, he displayed a pre-eminent insight into the spiritual mysteries and a supreme mastery in the art of presenting them to the average man. During his itinerary among the towns and villages of Galilee the people had flocked in multitudes to hear him; and they were agreed in their judgment that never man spake like this man. On the other hand he had buttressed his position as an aspirant to Messianic honors by many wonderful works of healing.

It was but yesterday that he came to Nain, though his fame had preceded him. At the entrance of the town he wrought a miracle which was the current theme of conversation. A young man was being carried to his burial, of whom it is written, "He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Life and death met face to face in the gateway. Jesus, seeing the woman bowed under the burden of her grief, had compassion upon her. He approached the bier and said with quiet authority, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" whereupon the dead returned to life. And Jesus "delivered him to his mother." It was a miracle so manifest, so stupendous, that all who saw it glorified God, saying, "A great prophet is risen among us!"

Simon the Pharisee must have heard of this occurrence, and had been impressed no doubt by the supernatural wisdom and power which it evinced; but he belonged to a class of Jews who, as yet, were

holding their decision in abeyance concerning Jesus. He cherished "the Hope of Israel"; his mind, as he supposed, was open to conviction; and it was probably for the purpose of resolving his uncertainty that he had invited the Nazarene Prophet to his hospitable board.

In the course of the dinner an incident occurred which precipitated his decision. The guests were reclining on couches about the table, according to custom, and their eyes were fastened on Jesus while he discoursed on things pertaining to the spiritual life. The contrast between the Pharisee and his plebeian guest must have been striking: the former was arrayed in a long robe with wide fringes, phylacteries on his forearm and a frontlet between his eyes on which was written, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord!" while the latter wore homespun, quite out of keeping with the sumptuous surroundings of this elegant home. Yet he was the observed of all observers, as in simple words he opened up the mysteries of truth.

In the midst of his discourse a woman entered the open courtyard and slowly climbed the veranda steps, as if under the burden of some heavy grief. She passed through the open doors into the triclinium, and making her way to the couch on which Jesus reclined, drew from her bosom an alabaster box of ointment, with which she anointed his feet, weeping meanwhile, and wiping his feet with her loosened hair.

It was little wonder that Simon and his guests were shocked at this proceeding, not only because all public intercourse between the sexes was proscribed under Jewish custom, but because the woman was notorious.

Such effrontery as this—in broad daylight—at a banquet—the like was never seen! Simon was amazed that Jesus apparently did not know the character of this woman, did not know that her very name was a hissing and a byword. He was indignant that such a violation of the proprieties should have occurred in his respectable home; and was shocked beyond measure that one reputed to be a prophet should accept in silence the touch of her polluted hands and the blistering baptism of her guilty tears. The question of the Messiahship of Jesus was, to his mind, settled then and there. "It could not be," said Simon within himself, "that one who fellowshipped with sinners in this manner was the Christ of God."

And Jesus, knowing his thought, answered it on this wise: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee."—"Rabbi, say on."—"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?"—In a tone of mingled contempt and indifference, Simon said, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." To which Jesus answered, "Thou hast rightly judged." Then, turning to the woman, he continued, "Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest me no water for my feet (the ordinary courtesy of hospitality), but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss (the customary salutation of a host); but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I

say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she hath loved much." Then to the woman he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Whereupon the guests began to murmur within themselves, saying, "Who is this that forgiveth sins, also?" But giving no heed, he said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

A strong light is here thrown upon the inner life and character of Simon. He was a wise man in his generation, no doubt; but he was so moved by prejudice as to be quite disabled for a just consideration and determination of the matter in hand.

In the first place, *Simon was totally Mistaken as to Christ.*

At the moment when he was saying within himself, "This so-called prophet is an impostor, else he would know the character of this woman," the eyes of Jesus were searching him through and through.

> "Shall he who with transcendent skill
> Fashioned the eye and formed the ear,
> Who moulded nature to His will,
> Shall he not see, shall he not hear?"

Oh, those eyes of the Lord! They "run to and fro throughout the whole earth, beholding the evil and the good." All things are naked and open before them. A man once undertook to escape from those eyes and left his experience on record thus: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me! Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off! Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways! Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or

whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me! If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalm cxxxix).

The reason why Simon supposed that Christ did not know the true character of this woman was because no discrimination was made against her on account of her flagrant sins. His thought was precisely that of those Pharisees who, on another occasion, brought a woman of like repute to Jesus, saying, "Moses in the law requireth that such as she shall be stoned; but what sayest thou?" And what did he say? "Go and sin no more!"

In his heart Simon was saying, "This is a strange perversion of justice." He was right, so far forth as wisdom is the basis of justice. But it was because Christ discriminated so wisely that he pardoned so utterly, in this case. We personify Justice as a woman wearing a hoodwink over her eyes, with scales in one hand and a sword in the other. Both the scales and the sword are in the hands of Jesus. He weighs the thoughts and actions of men, but, on occasion, arrests the uplifted sword. He can do this consistently with justice, because Justice is satisfied by his vicarious expiation of the sinner's sin. It is as if he said to this woman, "Be of good cheer! I know the horror of thy past life; but, behold, I bare

my shoulders to the scourge that thou mayest be healed by my stripes. Wherefore, thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee."

In the second place *Simon was greatly Mistaken as to this Woman.*

He was right in thinking her to be a great sinner. This was matter of common fame. Was she not "a woman of the town"? Nevertheless, the difference between her and her respectable censor was not a vital one, since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin is a question not of quality nor of quantity, but of simple fact. It is true there are great and little sins. A pirate swinging from the yard-arm is a greater malefactor than a pickpocket in the Tombs; but both are alike in their alienation from God. And that is the matter of vital importance after all. Sin is "trespass" or "transgression." When a trespasser has once leaped God's fence it matters little, so far as the law and its consequences are concerned, how far he goes afield. The essence of sin is *lèse-majesté,* whether the sinner be captain in command of the rebel troop or a mere private in the ranks. Nor is there any material difference, in the last reduction, between vulgar and respectable sinners, or between those who are in Sing Sing and those who are out of it. The thing to be emphasized is that sin means separation from God. The Hudson River is to all intents and purposes as wide as the Atlantic when a mother is on one side and her child on the other and there is neither bridge nor boat wherewith to cross it.

In the problem as it presented itself to the mind of Simon there was one factor of which he took no

cognizance; namely, the woman's penitence; while this, to the mind of Jesus, was the determining factor. It is placed in *alto relievo* in one of his parables:

> "Two went to pray: or rather say,
> One went to brag, the other went to pray.
>
> "One stands up close and treads on high,
> Where the other dare not lift his eye.
>
> "One nearer to God's altar trod,
> The other to the altar's God."

At the gateway of the Parthenon in Athens was an altar dedicated to Tears. No sacrifices were consumed nor votive offerings placed upon it; but the sorrowing bowed there and wept out their sorrows. It was the shadowing forth of a great truth; to wit, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm li, 17). Dearer to God than all the misereres of the chanting Pharisees is the cry of the returning prodigal. He sees him bowed with penitence and goes out to meet him while he is yet a great way off.

At the close of the twelfth century Richard, son of Henry II, conspired against his father and took refuge in a walled city, to which the king laid siege. In the course of the campaign Richard was wounded unto death; and, being overwhelmed with contrition, sent a messenger to his father asking that he might be permitted to see his face. His request was refused. Once and again he sent his humble appeal in vain. At length a procession passed through the gateway of the city under a flag of truce bearing the dying prince upon a stretcher; but ere it reached the royal pavilion

he had breathed his last. As the bearers waited there, they heard from within a strong cry like that of David, "O Richard, my son, my son; would God I had died for thee!" The Lord with whom we have to do makes no such mistakes. He knows the deep secrets of the heart; and where there is true penitence he has sworn by himself that he will not reject it.

In the third place *Simon was Mistaken in his Judgment as to Himself.*

He believed himself to be a righteous man. He was, in truth, an adherent of the most orthodox school of believers of his time; was no doubt scrupulous to the last degree in his observance of the Ceremonial Law; fasted, placed his sacrifices on the altar, paid tithes of mint, anise and cummin. But lip service does not avail with God. It was to men of this school that Jesus said, "Woe unto you, hypocrites! Ye are as whited sepulchres; fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness!"

No sin is more offensive to Christ than self-righteousness. It is noticeable that in his teachings he was ever more considerate of great sinners than of those who, leaning on their own righteousness, thought themselves to be accepted before God. The man who beats upon his breast, crying, "God, be merciful!" goes down to his house justified rather than he who parades his own worthiness.

There are two kinds of righteousness; and the line is drawn clearly between them. "I bear them record," says Paul, speaking of men like Simon, "that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and

going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x, 1-4). The only merit which makes us presentable before God is that which is imputed to us in Christ. This is the wedding garment which has been provided *gratis* for all who come to the marriage of the King's Son; it is of "fine linen, clean and white; which is the righteousness of saints." But there are those who, like this Pharisee, prefer to come in their own tinsel robes of personal desert; and a great disappointment awaits them, since it is a true saying, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Matt. xxii, 1-13).

By combining the foregoing Mistakes of Simon, we find that *his great, comprehensive Mistake was as to the Divine Plan of Salvation.*

This salvation is indeed based on merit; but it is the merit of Christ imputed to the sinner by faith and covering all his sins. The wages of sin is death, in every instance; the errand of Jesus was to avert this doom by lifting the ban for all who should believe in him.

The sole condition is faith. Jesus said to this woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee." It is important that we should understand precisely what faith is, when reduced to its simplest terms. It is nothing more nor less than acceptance of Christ. No intellectual belief or outward observance of rites and ceremonies can save us. A tunic on a nail never kept anybody warm; it must be put on. So is it with the righteousness of Christ; we receive it by receiving him.

And all the rest is love. "Her sins which are many are forgiven her; for she hath loved much." The "for" in this case is not causative, but illative; it might have been rendered "wherefore," but the distinction is of slight moment, since faith and love go arm in arm. They are born at the same moment, quickened by the same breath of life and almost indistinguishable in form and feature. Faith looks into the face of Jesus; love reposes on his breast. Faith kisses his feet; love goes following in his steps. But both are one in bringing the soul into oneness with God. A loving faith is what saves us.

It was on this very day, probably, that Jesus had said, while preaching in Nain, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And this woman, in all likelihood, had heard it. What an evangel was this to her burdened soul! She looked on Jesus, and two things happened then and there; she believed on him, and she loved him. Faith saved her on the instant; and ever after love constrained her. The anointing, the tears, the bleeding heart, the joy of pardon, were the expression of a loving faith in him.

Then the benediction: "Go in peace!" The preposition is rather "into" than "in"; as if to indicate that she was crossing the border from one country into another. Out of the old life into the new. She had known what guilty pleasure was; henceforth she should know the peace of God. And this is the great bequest of Christ. It was not long ere this Preacher of Nain went through the little wicket gate through which we all must pass; and what did he leave? A million? Nay; nothing but a homespun suit, well

worn, a saw and hammer long disused in his carpenter shop, and an empty wallet. Nothing more? Ah, yes; infinitely more! "Peace I leave with you; my peace give I unto you, not as the world maketh its bequests; let not your heart be troubled!" Blessed inheritance! Secured for us at what a cost! And of what immeasurable and eternal worth! Have we entered into that inheritance? The peace of God that passeth all understanding be ours; peace, "eternal, sacred, sure!"

XXIV

FREEDOM

In which he brings an unexpected Bar-sinister to the Attention of certain well-born Jews.

Jesus, to certain Jews: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jews: "We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—JOHN viii, 31-36.

DRYDEN says, "The love of liberty with life is given." So common is this sentiment that it would seem to be a divine keepsake or remembrancer of the sovereign will with which we were endowed when created in the likeness of God. It matters little how far a man may have fallen from his original estate, he is still, to use a paradoxical phrase, bound to be free. The poet Moore says,

> I'd rather dwell in Freedom's Hall
> With a cold, damp floor and a mouldering wall,
> Than to bow the head and bend the knee
> In the proudest palace of slavery.

But why, then, do we love sin? There is a singu-

lar incongruity between the love of freedom and the love of sin. For sin is bondage; as Christ says, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." This is not a figure of speech, but the statement of a fact which should be obvious to all. In the whole world there is not a living man in his right mind who does not have the witness of personal experience to the fact that he himself is a sinner, and the testimony of observation that his fellow-men are all in the same category. Paul says, "There is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And God says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

The sinner is bound with a chain of five links. The first of these is Tendency.

This used to be called "original sin"; but, owing to a new fashion in terminology, it is now referred to as "heredity." Call it whatever you please, the fact stands thus, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." And, singularly enough, this proverb, once so stoutly antagonized as a theological dogma, is universally accepted as a scientific proposition in these days.

The second link of the chain is Indulgence.

We suffer retribution not because of original but of actual sin (Ezekiel xviii, 1-4). If a man were to commit one sin and quit, that of itself would be sufficient to alienate him from God; since sin is *lèse-majesté* and "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." In the early annals of our country there was no braver soldier than Benedict Arnold, who distinguished himself under the walls of Quebec and in many of the

battles of our Revolutionary War; but a single act of treason at length so wholly obliterated his patriotic record that his portrait in the Military Academy at West Point has its face turned toward the wall.

The third link is Habit.

"Sin doth breed habit in a man." An eagle that had for years been tethered to a stake became so accustomed to its restraint that, after its chain was broken, it still kept going round and round in its former circle; so that it was found necessary to push it beyond the length of its tether before it would spread its wings and soar into the air. It has been wisely said that men are "kings in the liberty of choice, but slaves as to the consequence of it." And again,

"Habits are soon acquired;
But when we strive to strip them off 'tis being flayed alive."

The fourth link is Character.

Character is a mere bundle of habits. A man's moral value is the sum total of his thoughts and acts. In the philosophy of Peter the problem of Morality is solved by a simple process in addition (II. Pet. i, 5-8). And, conversely, an evil character is made by adding one sin to another; so that by continuance in transgression we constantly increase the hopelessness of our condition. This fixity of character is set forth in a picture in the Louvre representing Bacchus riding on a panther at a furious pace. You will find this, in concrete form, in the story of any person who has persistently given way to one or more besetting sins. A boy who stood in the doorway of Tam O'Shanter's inn at Ayr, a hundred years ago, listening to the merry jests of "Souter Johnny," consented to take a social

glass with him. He little thought what the outcome would be. As time passed he repeated the glass, until, not infrequently, he went reeling back from Ayr to the little cottage at Alloway. Had you remonstrated with him, he would doubtless have answered, "Pooh, pooh! I can take it or let it alone." But before he had passed the meridian of manhood he found himself so bound that he was constrained to say, "Were a barrel of rum in yonder corner of the room with a loaded cannon guarding it, and if I knew that I should be blown to atoms in the attempt, I would go to that barrel of rum." Poor Robert Burns! Is there anything sadder than the words in the dedication of his last book?

> "Reader, attend; whether thy soul
> Soar Fancy's flight beyond the Pole,
> Or darkling grub this narrow hole
> In low pursuit;
> Know prudent, cautious self-control
> Is wisdom's root!"

Let it not be supposed, however, that inebriety is the chiefest or most enthralling of sins. It is most likely to be shunned by self-respecting people because it stands forth to the public view naked in its shame. But there are many who congratulate themselves on their utter abhorrence and avoidance of such vulgar vices as drunkenness and open sensuality who yet yield themselves as willing servitors to pride, envy, avarice, worldliness, secret impurity, unbelief, malevolence or selfishness in some of its various forms. They may never make the acquaintance of the jail or the gutter, may clothe themselves in purple and fine linen,

provoke envy among their fellows and sleep finally under a monument with a Latin epitaph upon it; they are bound hand and foot, nevertheless, as bondslaves of sin. It is true that all sins are not equally heinous; but all alike are hateful to God; and the most polite and respectable are oftentimes most specious in their approach, most enslaving in their cumulative influence and most disastrous in their latter end.

The last link of the chain is Destiny.

The story runs on this wise: Tendency breeds Indulgence, Indulgence breeds Habit, Habit breeds Character, Character breeds Destiny. "The wages of sin is death," spiritual and eternal death.

And here is another marvel, a strange moral incongruity: that men should be afraid of hell and yet persist in sin. It can only be accounted for by the fact that sin carries an atmosphere of delusion with it. Sin blinds as it binds, so that its most hopeless victims are those who think themselves most free. The Jews to whom Jesus said "The truth shall make you free," retorted with some heat, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou then, Ye shall be made free?" They wholly misapprehended his meaning; but taking their own view of the matter, they were mistaken and should have known it. In the vicissitudes of their national life the Jews had been subjugated again and again. Had they forgotten Egypt, with its tale of bricks and whip of scorpions? Had they forgotten Babylon, where they "hung their harps on the willows and wept when they remembered Zion"? Or were they oblivious of the fact that at this very time they were groaning under the tyranny of Rome? But this was not what Jesus

referred to: he had in mind the far more cruel and hopeless bondage of sin.

The probability is, however, that had they known his real meaning they would have answered in the same way. The delusion is due primarily to a misunderstanding of the definition of freedom. The common view is that it means exemption from restraint; as Milton says,

> "License they mean when they cry Liberty:
> They bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
> And still revolt when Truth would set them free."

Which is freer, the comet that whizzes aimlessly through space or the planet that wheels in its normal orbit, never deviating a hair's breath through countless ages?

Which is freer, the locomotive that leaps the track and ditches itself, or the one that honors the law of its being by proceeding on the rails provided for it?

So, then, freedom is not the absence of restraint, but "perfect obedience to perfect law." This is true in society as in nature. "There is nothing situate under heaven's eye but hath its bounds in earth, in sea, in sky."

The "Free-lances" of the olden time were men who marched and fought with no rules of service or leader in commission, thinking themselves to be "free" because they pursued their own sweet will.

The freebooters or "filibusters" of the seventeenth century were sailors who had no regard for marine regulations; "sea wolves preying on the commerce of the world." Byron's Corsair sings,

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts are boundless and our souls are free!"

In like manner there are so-called "free-thinkers" in our time who disregard all the rules that should control the processes of thought, cast away their Bibles, plunge into all manner of intellectual absurdities and boast of liberty; as did Theodore Parker when he said, "I will not receive this proposition on the authority of any such person as God."

And there are free-livers, too, many and everywhere. You may find them in their last estate in our slums and "Tenderloins," doing as they please. They are not restrained by any trammels of social life, by marital bonds, by statutes and ordinances. They are self-pleasers. "I care for nobody; no, not I: and nobody cares for me." They are alike indifferent to the laws of society, the laws of the State and the laws of God.

Is this freedom? God save the mark! This is license, "the full corn in the ear." This is sin ripened into Character. In all the world there is nothing more pitiable than the sight of such bondage. It is worse than to be a galley slave, scourged to his dungeon. It is worse than to be a "plantation hand," tied to the stake and shrinking under the cat-o'-nine-tails. It is worse, unspeakably, because it is so hopelessly voluntary. Let "Ichabod" be written upon the forehead of a man when he no longer cares to be free.

But Christ the Emancipator comes this way. At the very outset of his ministry he enters the synagogue at Nazareth and opens the book where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because he

hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised." And he adds, "To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears!"

Christus Liberator! He comes to break every chain and bid the oppressed go free. He does this, to begin with, by pardoning the mislived past. "There is, therefore, no more condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." No more of the "certain fearful-looking-for of judgment." Is it nothing to be delivered, thus, from memories that pursue us like wraiths and hinder us in the pursuit of better things? No man can call himself free who drags behind him an ever-lengthening chain. Life is a "race set before us," and the way to begin it is to disencumber one's self. No one can venture hopefully on the work of character-building who does not, at the outset, take advantage of the overtures of divine mercy for the cleansing from sin.

But this is not all. Christ not only pardons; he enfranchises. Pardon is merely a laying aside; but the divine enfranchisement is a girdle about the loins. The younger son in the Parable, who chafed under the parental authority at home, was of the opinion that if he could get away into the country he would be free. He crossed the hills, accordingly, and for a time did as he pleased; wasting his substance in riotous living, until his false conception of liberty bore its normal fruit and he "went into the fields to feed swine." Here he discovered the fact that there is a tremendous difference between license and liberty; and, coming to himself, he said, "I will arise and go

to my father's house." On the way he composed an address: "I will say to my father, I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." But servitude at home was out of the question. His father came out, while he was yet a great way off, to meet him and interrupted his prepared speech with a call to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet!" The robe was a token of restoration to the privileges of the home; as it is written, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation." The signet ring was a token of restoration to the heirship; as it is written, "If a son, then an heir; an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ." But the shoes were the token of enfranchisement: for the slaves of those times went barefoot. The son was now entitled to all the privileges of the father's house. Free at last! Free to make for himself a new record of character, since the story of the past was blotted out.

But, alas! we are not there yet. We are still struggling against our fetters. No one knows this better than our critics, the "children in the market place," who, to our discomfiture, constantly observe and not infrequently remark upon the remnants of sin abiding in us.

But we have started out. We are on the way. And there is a vast difference between a man who rests content in his bondage and one who is a fugitive from bonds. The slave who fled from his Southern master, in slavery days, had to make his way through the Dismal Swamp, with the bloodhounds baying on his track. If at length, travelling by night and hiding all

day, he succeeded in crossing Mason and Dixon's line, he was not yet free; since the decision of Justice Taney made it imperative that the people of the Northern States should restore the runaway. But on he went, following the North Star, till at length he crossed the Canada line; then, thank God, he was free! You will find the counterpart of this in Paul's experience where he says, "I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the next word is a word of triumph: "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord!"

Aye, the full deliverance will come at last through him. In our translation to the Better Country it shall be said of our sins as Moses said of the Egyptians at the crossing of the Red Sea, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord! For as to these Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them no more forever!" The long struggle will be over; and the reward promised to the overcomer shall be ours: "I will write upon him the name of the City of my God." The freedom of the heavenly city!

What a day that will be when we shall sing like Israel, "Thou hast brought forth the people whom thou hast redeemed!" No more sin, no more shortcoming, no more chafing of the weary chain. Our joy will be like that of the people of San Domingo, who, waiting long to hear the result of the Abolition Bill in the House of Commons, saw at length a signal waving from the masthead of an approaching vessel, and sent the shout echoing over the island, "Free, free, all free!"

But do we want it? Or do we prefer to remain in bondage? Alas, the misery of the situation is, that the sinner is wedded to his sin, like the prisoner of Chillon, who dwelt so long in his dungeon that he conceived an affection for it:

"And when they came to set me free,
I asked not why and recked not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be;
I learned to love despair!

. . . . .

With spiders I had friendship made
And watched them in their solemn trade

. . . . .

My very chains and I grew friends—
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh!"

But freedom is offered by divine grace to every man who really cares for it. The Liberator comes to the prison-house with key in hand. This is the key, "He that believeth shall enter into life." There is a little window in the door of the dungeon called "Opportunity," through which the prisoner may take this key and open the door if he will. Is not that enough? Nay, then the Liberator will do more: he will himself turn the key and throw wide the door. Come forth! Is not that enough? Nay, then, the prisoner shall be without excuse. The Liberator offers his hand, a helping hand. Will the bondman take it? Let the sinner clasp hands with Christ, and he shall straightway be led forth out of the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

XXV

IN SIGHT OF HEAVEN

In which a Man who has reached the Threshold of the Kingdom is urged to take one more Step.

One of the Scribes: "What commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus: "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

The Scribe: "Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

Jesus: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."
—Mark xii, 28-34.

The general impression as to the scribe or "lawyer" who came asking "Which is the greatest commandment?" is that he was unfriendly to Christ. I think this a misapprehension. He was, indeed, the representative of a wicked cabal in this instance; but many an honest sailor has trod the deck of a privateer. It is said that his purpose was to "tempt" Jesus; but the word appears not to be used in its sinister sense, meaning only that he wished to put the reputed wisdom of this much heralded teacher to the test. He was

not a scoffer nor a mere casuist; but, as the issue shows, an honest and earnest seeker after truth.

It was Tuesday, April 4th; the last day of the public ministry of Jesus. The Feast of the Passover was drawing near and the city was already thronged with strangers from every part of Jewry. The coming of Jesus to this festival was most disconcerting to the religious leaders who had warned him again and again to refrain from "disturbing the peace." He was now teaching in Solomon's Porch, and the multitudes were thronging to hear him. If possible, he must be disposed of before the Passover; but, in order to prevent disturbance, it must be done under cover of the law. There must be a valid charge against him. At a called session of the Sanhedrin it was accordingly determined that emissaries should be sent to entrap him.

At this time there were three parties in the Sanhedrin. The Herodians, or Romanized Jews, held that it was wise policy to acquiesce in Roman laws and customs with the best possible grace. The Sadducees were rationalists, or free-thinkers, denying the resurrection in particular, and assuming an agnostic attitude toward the future life. The Pharisees, or orthodox Jews, held firmly to the inspiration of the Scriptures and insisted on the rigid observance of the elaborate ceremonial of the Mosaic law. The plan was to send a delegation representing each of these parties to take part in the proposed inquisition of Jesus.

The Herodian delegate propounded a politico-religious question which had provoked much discussion: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" The trap was cleverly set, its purpose being to place Jesus

in a dilemma; since if he answered yes he would antagonize the loyal Jews and if no the Roman authorities. Matthew Henry says, "It was proposed thus to catch him in a premunire." But he was quite equal to the occasion. "Show me the tribute money," he said; whereupon a penny was placed in his hands.—"Whose image and superscription is this?"—"Cæsar's."—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

It was now the turn of the Sadducean delegate. His question was one of the thumb-worn subtleties of his school, known as the Question of the Seven-fold Widow; to wit, "A certain woman had seven husbands, all of whom died without issue: now if there is to be a Resurrection, whose wife shall she be?" The answer of Jesus covered the case, being a denial *in toto* of the sensual conception of Paradise and a general statement of the fact that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Then came this lawyer as the mouth-piece of the Pharisee or orthodox party. His question was a fair one: "Master, which is the first commandment of all?" In the rabbinical teaching there were six hundred and thirteen precepts, of which three hundred and sixty-five were negative and two hundred and forty-eight affirmative; and these were graded from greatest to least. By common consent the least commandment was that which referred to the robbing of a bird's nest (Deut. xxii, 6-7). But there was a variety of opinions as to the greatest. Some held that it was the law touching fringes and phylacteries; others contended that it was the requirement as to ablutions: and still others that it was the injunction against the

profane use of the divine name. But Jesus went to the root of the matter with a word. Pointing to the *shema* which was inscribed upon the frontlet worn by the lawyer between his eyes, he quoted, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord!" and added "The first of all the commandments is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. And the second is like unto it, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The real testing was thus shifted from Jesus to the lawyer himself, who answered in all frankness, "Master, thou hast spoken truly; there is one God and there is none other but he; and to love him supremely and to love one's neighbor as one's self is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Whereupon Jesus, seeing that he answered discreetly, said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

It is our purpose to inquire as to the meaning of these words. And, to begin with, what are we to understand by "the kingdom of God"?

One of the notable books of recent years is entitled, "The Republic of God." But this is a misnomer. The government of God is an absolute monarchy. It may be called a "commonwealth," inasmuch as its immeasurable riches are shared by all; but not a republic, because the word of its Magistrate is supreme, exclusive and ultimate law. All things in the universe are bound to obey God. A grain of sand is constrained by the laws of its being; so is every planet that sweeps around its orbit in infinite space. A drop of water holds itself in perfect accord with the law of

its being; so does the ocean, which hears and obeys the word, "Thus far, and no farther; here let thy proud waves be stayed!" The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, are under a like restraint; and when we speak of "the laws of their being" we are using a term synonymous and interchangeable with the divine will.

"The Lord is King! Lift up thy voice
O earth, and all ye heavens rejoice.
From world to world the cry shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King!"

But there is one order of creation which is outside of this kingdom; that is, the human race. Man was created in God's likeness and therefore with a sovereign will. Of himself, in pure wilfulness, he has turned aside and gone into his own way. And this is true of all; as it is written, "There is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Now, sin is high treason. It is defined to be "any transgression of the divine law." The old word "anomy," now obsolete, expresses it. Sin is rebellion. It outlaws a man; that is, places him in a state of enmity against God. The penalty is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And this death is eternal alienation from God.

It has pleased God, however, to make provision for the restoration of the sinful race. It is with this purpose in view that he sends his only begotten Son into the world. His coming is announced by a royal herald, crying, "Repent ye! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" At the outset of his ministry our Lord announces to Nicodemus the prerequisite for admis-

sion to the kingdom in these words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you; Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"; that is, regeneration is necessary to the recovery of the divine franchise. And when Nicodemus expressed his bewilderment, saying, "How can these things be?" Jesus laid down the doctrine of Justification by Faith on this wise, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here then is the condition of restoration; a man must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment a man thus believes or accepts Christ as his Saviour from sin, he enters into the kingdom; which is not located in some remote planet or postponed to any Golden Age, but is here and now; so that multitudes, accepting Christ and regenerated by his Spirit, are "pressing into it." And all are invited and urged to enter it.

Now to return to the lawyer; let us inquire what Jesus meant by saying to him "Thou are not far from the kingdom of God." There is a sense in which all sinners are far from the kingdom, since all alike are "dead" in trespasses and sins. If there were somewhere a man who had never committed but a single sin in his whole life, he would nevertheless have placed himself thereby in a state of rebellion against God. But it is obvious that all sins are not equally heinous, and that all sinners are not to be beaten with equal stripes. Some have sinned against clearer light than others. Some have run boldly and defiantly on the bosses of God's shield. Did not Christ say to Pilate, "He that delivereth me unto thee hath the

greater sin"? Leprosy is always leprosy; but the man whose joints are falling asunder is a greater leper than one who has but a single scale on his forehead. So some are at a vast distance from the kingdom by reason of long and flagrant indulgence in known sin. It makes a difference whether a man, on leaving home, goes into the next county or into the jungles of Africa; and on his return it makes a difference whether he is taking ship from Liverpool or standing at the threshold of his father's house.

One reason why this lawyer would appear to have been drawing nigh to the kingdom is the fact that he believed something. His creed was expressed in the formulary of the *shema,* "There is one God; and there is none other but he." As a scribe, he was familiar with the Scriptures, and he received their teaching as authoritative on that point. It is a favorable sign when a man can lay his hand upon any great fundamental truth and say, "This I believe because the Lord hath said it."

We note another reason for our Lord's approval in the fact that this lawyer had a Code of Morals, founded on his belief in the true God. He assented without a moment's hesitation to Christ's summary of the law, namely, that all its precepts were briefly comprehended in love toward God and men. If he was sincere in this, and there is no reason to think otherwise, he was a man of principle; endeavoring to conform his conduct to his creed, or, as the Nonsuch Professor says, "to bring the bottom of his life up to the top of his light." Now while it is true that no man is justified by the deeds of the law, it is true also that one who sincerely tries to live an upright life is

nearer to the kingdom than one who lives in known and flagrant sin. It is necessary to say this, because now and then one hears, particularly in "Rescue Missions," appeals which seem to bear a contrary construction. God stretches out his hands to the vilest sinner, to the drunkard and libertine, but never with an intimation that they are near to the kingdom. Nay, they are afar off; though their case is by no means hopeless, since "while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return." The promise is to those that are afar off as well as to those who are near: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

And another favorable sign in the case of this lawyer was his dissatisfaction with himself and with his formal religion. This was expressed in his words, "Master, thou hast said truly; to love God and to love one's neighbor is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." He was living under an economy of burnt offerings and sacrifices; he paid tithes, gave attention to ablutions, wore phylacteries, laid his offerings upon the altar as duly prescribed in the Mosaic law. But this sort of conventional observance did not satisfy him. He felt somehow that he had not reached the root of the matter. His heart was saying,

> "Not all blood of beasts
> On Jewish altars slain,
> Can give the guilty conscience peace,
> Or take away its stain."

And still further, this man was not far from the kingdom because his mind was open to conviction. We infer this from what the Lord said, "Thou hast

answered discreetly." The word might have been rendered "frankly" or "without prejudice." Now prejudice is the great obstacle in the way of salvation of the average man. He comes to the Bible, not to discover truth, but to find out whether the Bible will not strengthen him in his prejudgments. It is related of Sir Isaac Newton, a most absent-minded man, that he was found trying to light a candle which had an extinguisher on it. But this was not more preposterous than to come to Jesus with a mind closed by prejudice against him. The attitude of this lawyer was frank and ingenuous. He wanted to know; he was eager to learn. He addressed Jesus in respectful terms and appears to have been ready to be convinced. He was following up his light, was feeling his way.

And now he stands at the very door of the Kingdom. Did not Jesus say, "I am the door," and, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me"? The man is at the threshold, therefore, of the kingdom. What remains? Nothing but to cross it; to accept Christ. One step and he is there! His attitude is precisely that of the young ruler to whom Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest; part with everything that separates between thee and me, and come and follow me."

Here ends the story. We have no means of knowing what ultimately became of this man; but there is every reason to think that, standing where he did and being such as he was, he took the fateful step and entered the kingdom of God.

The practical application is for us. The one who reads these words was probably never nearer the kingdom than he is just now. This may be one of

the crucial moments of his life. What will he do about it?

Let us hear a parable. Two men were journeying in the Valley of the Colorado. They were strangers to each other. They walked so near that they might easily have spoken or clasped hands; but they did not. Ere long they parted and went their several ways. Each climbed the steep diverging paths and presently saw each other again; but they were now on opposite sides of the Great Cañon of the Colorado. They seemed not far apart; but between them lay a bridgeless chasm. So shall it be when this probationary life is over. Here a man walks in the Vale of Mercy, side by side with Christ. He may at any moment grasp his outstretched hand and enter into an eternal friendship with him. But death is the great separator. It ends probation; it fixes, formulates, crystallizes character; it decrees "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is holy let him be holy still." Thus there is to be "a great gulf fixed," separating those who are in the kingdom from those who are forever afar off.

It may be that someone is saying, "So far as I know I am ready to meet any requirement in order to salvation. I feel that, while not far from the kingdom, I am not in it. What must I do?" There is only one answer, and a very simple one: *Accept Christ.* You have informed yourself of the truth of the Gospel; and you are satisfied as to the right thing to do. Your mind is convinced, your conscience convicted; your will alone is at fault. There is nothing between you and the kingdom but your refusal of Christ. Take him, and with him the assurance of pardon, "Thy

sins be forgiven thee." Take him, and with him the inspiration to an earnest life. Take him and with him the strength of his friendship, which is as a strong staff to lean on. Take him and with him the invaluable franchise of citizenship in the kingdom of God.

The word "opportunity" is from *ob-portus,* that is, opposite the bay. A few years ago the Oregon was wrecked just outside the harbor of New York. You are, my friend, within sight of heaven just now. All that remains is to cross the line; to say, "I will! By the grace of God, I do!"

XXVI

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

In which Jesus announces his glorious Return to reign from the River unto the Ends of the Earth.

Jesus: "Yea, I come quickly."
John: "Amen; Come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. xxii, 20.

The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is not deeply emphasized in our time, but the early disciples made much of it. You will find it in the last words of Paul: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—It is in the last words of Peter: "There shall come in the last days scoffers saying, Where is the promise of his coming? But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing: that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day; and he is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish. But the Day of the Lord will come!"—It is in the last words of James: "Be ye patient, therefore, unto the coming of the Lord, as the husbandman waiteth for his fruits. Be patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord

draweth nigh!"—And it is in the last words of John, sole survivor of the Old Guard of Apostles, who from his desert home in Patmos heard his Lord calling "Behold, I come quickly!" and answered "Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus!" Thus the early Christians strengthened themselves in "the glorious hope." Their morning greeting was *Maranatha,* "He cometh!"

I want to make a clear statement of the things which we know definitely concerning the great doctrine. Let me begin by frankly saying that there are many things we do not know about it. We want to stand on *terra firma,* and receive only so much as is authoritatively revealed in the Word of God.

First, He will Surely Come.

At this point our information is without if or peradventure. Jesus said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" He will surely come. Our faith may tremble, but his word abides. His second advent was announced at the time when he was received up from among us. The disciples had come to Olivet by appointment to meet him. The Great Tragedy was over; and he had risen from the dead. He had announced beforehand that he would meet them at this mountain, and they were there awaiting him. No doubt they conversed in low murmurs as to the sacred memories of the past: for, whichever way they looked there were his footprints. They wondered among themselves whether he was now about to establish his sovereignty on earth; when, on a sudden, he stood among them, and, lifting his hands, uttered his usual greeting, "Peace be unto you." He then spoke to them at length of the coming

of his kingdom, and renewed his great commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This done, he ascended from their midst; the earth could no longer keep him, the stronger attraction of heaven drew him. With hands stretched out in a final benediction, he passed out of sight; and they stood gazing and wondering.

It may be there was a golden glow, like a chariot of fire in the skies; vibrations in the air like waving banner; a crimson splendor, as if the celestial gates were thrown open. Oh, if they could have heard and seen the things that were happening beyond those clouds; where he whose head had been crowned with thorns but was now crowned with glory, passed in among the adoring throngs to the imperial majesty "which he had with the Father before the world was." Was there ever such a triumphal entry? "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of glory enter in."

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus whom ye have seen ascend into the heavens shall come again as ye have seen him go!" Two men in shining apparel stood by, and that was their message: "Why do ye contemplate the voiceless skies? This is no time for reveries. The harvest field is yellow and awaits you. To your tasks! He shall come again, as ye have seen him go!"

Secondly, He shall Come Unexpectedly.

He himself says that his coming will be "as a thief in the night"; "as the lightning shineth out of the skies"; and, again, "as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be." How was it in the days of Noah? An old man was building

a boat five hundred miles from the nearest navigable water. The people passed by and wagged their heads and tapped their foreheads, thinking him demented; they made sport of him, saying, "It seems clear weather, though you speak of a deluge. A fine boat, that upon the ways. When will the launch be?" And in an hour when they thought not, the flood came and swept them all away. "So," said Jesus, "shall my coming be."

Thirdly, It will be a Personal Coming.

The Coming of Christ is in various ways. He came to you graciously once, saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If thou wilt open to me, I will come in and sup with thee." And your Christian life began when you opened to him.—He comes to a man sympathetically, in time of sorrow, as he promised, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."—He comes dynamically to the world every hour of every day, as he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the present order of things."—He comes to us at death; "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

But there is something more. All these interpretations fall short of exhausting the promise of Christ. He is to come *in propia persona.* And that leads me to say,—

Fourthly, It will be a Visible Coming.

Ye shall see him come as ye have seen him go. *Hisce cum oculis,* "With these very eyes." It may be from this side or from the other; it matters not; we

shall see him at his coming. And we shall know him, for he is the very same. He will be recognizable, at his triumphal advent, as the very Christ who lived and suffered among men. His hands will be the same that ministered to their needs, his feet the same that walked along the paths of Palestine; his heart will be the same heart that throbbed responsive to human want, and broke at last under the burden of human sin. The marks will be in his hands and in his side,—the *stigmata* by which the world will know its crucified and triumphant Lord. He did not become incarnate simply as a temporary expedient or to accomplish a transient purpose; he remains forevermore the incarnate Son of God. Thus John the Evangelist saw him, seated upon his throne, "as a lamb that had been slain."

Fifthly, His Coming is to be Glorious.

Not as it was at Bethlehem: a mother looking fondly down into her baby's face, a group of rustics at the door-way of the cave, standing on tip-toe peering in; a few shepherds on their knees about the child; a company of wise men on camels approaching, to lay their gold and myrrh and frankincense at his feet; —that was all. Not so will be our Lord's final advent. The tokens of attendant majesty are definitely given us.

The trumpet shall sound, the trumpet of a great angel going as a herald before the King. He will then appear in a pavilion of cloud;—not the dust cloud that rises before the outriders of a king drawing nigh in the highway; but the *shechinah,* the "most excellent glory" in which the Lord has manifested himself again and again; the Cloud that was over the

Tabernacle, that led the Children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness, that enfolded the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. And he will be attended by a multitude of angels. The shining seats of heaven will be emptied to furnish his retinue on that great "Palm Sunday" when hosannas will fill the earth as they fill the heavens now. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands before him. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Finally, He will Come Beneficently.

He lifted his hands in blessing as he vanished through the skies. He shall so come, lifting his hands again and saying "Peace be unto you." His fan will be in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. One thing shall be swept utterly from the face of the earth, to wit, sin. No more trail of the serpent, no more shame and remorse, no more wrong and oppression, no more war and desolation, no more envy and hypocrisy, no more sin! The Tabernacle of God shall be among men and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God.

But when shall these things be? Here we have definite information, but not such as enables us to determine the precise date. To the disciples at Olivet who asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" his answer was, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." And on another

occasion he had said: "Let no man deceive you. For many shall come, saying, 'Lo, here! or Lo, there!' Believe them not. For of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. The Son of Man shall come at an hour when ye think not."

But there is one sign that definitely fixes the nearest point at which our Lord can possibly appear, and he himself has given it: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." We thus perceive why the weary years and centuries have dragged their slow length along. The Lord is waiting until his people shall have fulfilled their great commission. He did not say that the world must be converted before he would come: he did say that the gospel must be proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth. And he left that injunction upon his Church, laying the responsibility upon you and me. He is waiting, then, upon his people. He will not come until the gospel of the kingdom has been "preached as a witness unto all nations." And oh, how that word of his rings out: "Go ye!" Has it touched your heart? Has it pierced your conscience, yet? Go ye! Go ye, preach the gospel of the kingdom to the last man! "Then shall the end come."

Meanwhile, *watch*. The word occurs again and again in the teachings of Jesus. How are we to watch? Like those that look out of the windows? Nay, he has told us how: "Let your loins be girt about, and your lights burning." A man lights his lamp for an expected guest, and girds his loins when he addresses himself to an important task. Watch,

therefore, at your work, for the coming of the Son of Man!

At the close of the tenth century the Christian world thought that the end was drawing nigh, since this was the close of the cycle of a thousand years.

The signs were all favorable. The social deeps were broken up, there were wars, famines, pestilences, natural convulsions, confusion everywhere, "Signs in heaven above and in the earth beneath." The Lord surely was drawing near. In the last year of the century the impending event was proclaimed from Christian pulpits. Industry was everywhere suspended. The Emperor of Germany announced the Truce of God, and went about, in a garb of penitence, preaching the Coming of Christ. On the last day of the year the people clothed themselves in ascension robes; and at sunset betook themselves to the roofs of the houses, the porches of cathedrals and the open fields, where they stood expectant. The hours passed until midnight. Midnight passed; the stars began to fade. The first gleam of morning came; and the Christian world, heaving a sigh of relief as of one coming out of a paralysis of mingled fear and hope, went back to its work.

Then came the Crusades, the greatest movement in history prior to the Reformation. The monks, led by Peter the Hermit, with kings and courtiers, went everywhere proclaiming the Conquest of the Holy Sepulchre. *Deus vult!* "It is the will of God!" We must do something toward the coming of the Son of Man. We must be waiting, but waiting at our tasks. Thus Christ is ever saying to his people "Watch!" Watch and be sober, watch with your

loins girt. Let your door be on the latch! It may be at evening, or at midnight, or in the morning that he will come, but watch! "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing."

> Who would sit down and sigh for a lost Age of Gold
> When the Lord of all ages is nigh?—
> For each old Age of Gold was an Iron Age too,
> And the meekest of saints shall find something to do
> In the Day of the Lord at hand!

Wherefore, let us busy ourselves in faithful service and be ready. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing"; and blessed are "all they that love his appearing." I greet you in the glorious hope: "*Maranatha*"! Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Prayer.

O God, we love the Appearing of thy Son, in whose death are the issues of our life; and we pray that the time may speedily arrive when thou, working through thy people in thy Church, shalt have prepared the way for the Great Coming. Meanwhile make us faithful, every one in his own place, watching, with loins girt and arms bared for labor, that we may be ready to give him welcome. Hear us for his name's sake. Amen.

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